



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.¹ 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:

¹Public 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

<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.

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD VIA REMOTE ACCESS
AT 6:00 P.M., WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER, 2020
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Dudson, A. (Chairman)	
Witton, P.T. (Vice-Chairman)	
Adamson, G. (Leader)	Jones, Mrs. V.
Alcott, G.	Kraujalis, J.T.
Allen, F.W.C.	Layton, A.
Bennett, C. (Telephone)	Lyons, Miss O.
Boucker, A.S.	Martin, Mrs. C.E.
Buttery, M.S.	Mitchell, Mrs. C.
Cartwright, Mrs. S.M.	Molineux, G.N.
Crabtree, S.K.	Muckley, A.M.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Newbury, J.A.A.
Dunnett, Ms. A.J.	Pearson, A.R. (Telephone)
Fisher, P.A.	Preece, J.P.T.L.
Fitzgerald, Mrs. A.A.	Smith, C.D.
Freeman, Miss M.A.	Startin, P.D.
Hewitt, P.M.	Stretton, Mrs. P.Z., M.B.E.
Hughes, R.J.	Thompson, Mrs. S.L.
Johnson, J.P.	Todd, Mrs. D.M.
Johnson, T.B.	Wilkinson, Ms. C.L.
Jones, B.	Woodhead, P.E.

42. Apologies

Apologies were submitted for Councillors M. Sutherland and Mrs. H.M. Sutton.

Councillors C. Bennett and Ms. C.L. Wilkinson were not present at the start of the meeting due to issues with signing into the meeting.

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

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

44. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020, be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment being made:

- Page 31, third line down, should read 'all but one', rather than 'Only one...'

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

- (i) The following question was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4B(c) by member of the public, Jacquie Prestwood:

"Is there a progress report on the new cemetery?"

Councillor Mrs. C. Mitchell, Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader, provided the following response:

"I welcome Jacquie Prestwood's question and I am pleased to confirm, that work started on the new cemetery in June and is progressing well. Work has continued through lockdown and the pandemic and is due for completion during the last quarter on 2020-21 (by March 2021)."

Jacquie Prestwood asked the following supplementary question:

"Are there updates on the crematorium, such as planned dates for completion works?"

The Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader provided the following response to the supplementary question:

"The crematorium was being developed by a company called Horizon, with the work being done at the same time as the Council, although it was approximately one month behind schedule. The anticipated finish date was late spring / early summer, and whilst Covid had put big pressure on sourcing building supplies, the project was hopefully not too far behind, but both schemes could finish at the same time."

- (ii) The following question was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4B(c) by member of the public, Jacquie Prestwood:

"Cannock Stadium, are there any updates on future plans for the park?"

Councillor Mrs. C. Mitchell, Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader, provided the following response:

"Again, I welcome Ms Prestwood's question on another exciting development that this Cabinet has been instrumental in taking forward.

We have already developed the site as a community sport and recreation hub with new toddler and junior play facilities, a new Multi-use Games area, 14 community allotments and building, a BMX track completed by the contractor who constructed the BMX facility for the 2012 Olympics, nearly 200 metres of lit footpaths for walking, cycling and running and 10 items of green gym equipment.

On 18 March this year Cabinet approved an additional £124,570 to be included in the

Capital programme, making a total investment of up to £400,570 to be allocated toward Phase 2 improvements.

Permission to spend was also approved to deliver:

Improvement	Estimated Amount £
Skate Park Facility	175,000
Additional Footpaths	51,000
Eco Mulch to BMX banks	70,000
Eco Trail, Flower beds and Landscaping	25,000
Barbecue/social picnic areas	15,000
Temporary Toilet Provision	15,000
Contingency 10%	35,100
Sub Total	386,100
Professional Fees 4%	15,444
Total	401,544

Although work has not started on any of the key improvements above, officers have been working together with the Friends Group and our partner IHL on developing new Notice and Information Boards for the site, a new footpath and a new storage container for the allotments.

Despite the pandemic it is hoped that some works will be undertaken in the new year.”

Jacque Prestwood asked the following supplementary question:

“Were any events planned for the future at the stadium?”

The Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader provided the following response to the supplementary question:

“The Council was working with the Friends of Cannock Stadium and an event had been held on Halloween that was well supported and attended. As for the future, a Christmas event was planned, but it remained to be seen how this could be held with Covid restrictions in place. People were advised to keep an eye on the group’s Facebook page for updates.”

(iii) The following question was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4B(c) by member of the public, Les Bullock:

“In view of the current level of job losses due to the Coronavirus pandemic, what are Cannock Chase District Council doing to try and offset these losses wherever possible?”

Councillor T.B. Johnson, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, provided the following response:

“Before the pandemic, the District had enjoyed a period of economic growth and the

District's unemployment rate in March 2020 stood at just 2.6% - it is now 5.6% and we have seen almost 2,000 additional people claiming benefits in just eight months.

The Council has focused its efforts since the start of the pandemic on supporting local businesses through the lockdown and helping them to get back up and running as restrictions were eased.

To support this priority, the Council has been responsible for distributing Government business support funding to small businesses and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. Over £22m of grant funding has been paid with almost 1500 businesses receiving a grant.

Linked to the introduction of the Local COVID alert system and second national lockdown, the Council has been allocated additional funding from the Government to distribute to local businesses directly affected by the restrictions and mandatory closures and is currently processing grants to eligible local businesses.

The Council has also been allocated £2 million by Government via the Additional Restrictions Grant which is a discretionary fund and Officers are currently developing a policy and criteria to administer this fund.

The Council will continue to support businesses during the winter and I would encourage local businesses to contact Officers to find out whether they are eligible for grant support.

Major investment schemes such as the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet West Midlands are critical for our economic recovery and the Council is working closely with McArthurGlen and Walsall College to ensure local residents can access the new jobs that are being recruited to at the moment – in total phase 1 of the scheme will create 800 new jobs. The Designer Outlet will also benefit the visitor economy with 3.5 million people expected to visit the Outlet per annum, which will create opportunities for tourism and hospitality businesses – which is particularly crucial given the difficulties this sector has faced during the pandemic.

There are also a number of other opportunities in the pipeline which will benefit the District. These include the creation of new job opportunities and investment in key employment areas such as Kingswood Lakeside in Cannock and the regeneration of Rugeley Power Station and the Commonwealth Games 2022 – Mountain Biking event on Cannock Chase.

I will be bringing forward a detailed report to Cabinet in December outlining some of key employment and skills opportunities available to the District to support economic recovery.”

Councillor C. Bennett joined the meeting during the presentation of this question.

Les Bullock asked the following supplementary question:

‘With regard to the Designer Outlet, will it bring the level of quality retail jobs that were originally envisaged when discussions first started with McArthurGlen, as part of the Council’s long term strategy?’

The Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader provided the following response to the supplementary question:

‘Yes, it was hoped so. There will be an estimated 3.5 million visitors each year to the Designer Outlet and it was hoped that they could also be integrated into the

Council's hospitality and tourism sectors. The Designer Outlet will provide both entry level and more senior retail jobs, with a clear career path for people to develop and gain advancement. Training is being provided by Walsall Retail Academy.'

- (iv) The following question was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4B(c) by member of the public, Les Bullock:

"Will the 'Green Agenda' help to create new job opportunities in the area, with hopefully, a resultant 'upskilling' into more high tech jobs for our community"

Councillor T.B. Johnson, Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, deferred to Councillor J. Newbury, Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader, who provided the following response:

"Yes I do believe that the 'Green Agenda' will create opportunities for the District and the Council is keen to ensure that the District plays its role in a wider West Midlands response to the 'Green Industrial Revolution'. The Council's Economic Prosperity Strategy published in January 2020 is firmly focused on developing 'clean growth' sector and whilst we have been blown somewhat off course this year with COVID-19, we want to make sure that clean and green growth is part of our recovery.

In terms of the skills Agenda, our immediate focus is to work with our partners to get unemployed people back into work as soon as possible and we will need to have a pragmatic approach to supporting new jobs. Longer term, our ambition is to develop higher skilled and higher paid jobs and work with partners such as South Staffordshire College and Walsall College to upskill and reskill local people to ensure they can get access to local employment opportunities.

We have a very productive partnership with South Staffordshire College and the re-establishment of the Cannock Campus has seen the creation of a new £1.5 million Engineering Skills Academy and the College is currently progressing plans for a Digital Skills Academy, with funding secured from the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP. The Engineering Skills Academy will support a new generation of engineers within the District, creating new Apprenticeship and learning opportunities, and engineering plays a key role in the development of the 'clean growth' sector.

The development of a Digital Skills Academy for Cannock Chase will also make an important contribution to the 'Green Agenda'. All of us have had to utilise technology more than ever as a result of COVID-19 and do more of our business on-line. The Digital Skills Academy will provide a more comprehensive digital offer locally for business and learners, including apprentices, adult learners and industry standard specialist courses.

Key projects such as the regeneration of Rugeley Power Station will also position the District as a location for clean growth. The site owner has ambitions to re-develop the site as a sustainable community with a focus on zero and low carbon development and taking advantage of renewable energy technologies - making a direct contribution to the development of our Green Agenda."

Les Bullock asked the following supplementary question:

'Will the new jobs be retained for local people, and will training also extend to high schools in the District to prepare them for moving into further education and training?'

The Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader provided the following response to the supplementary question:

'Clearly there is a need to provide training for pupils at all levels, not just in post-16 education, and the Council hoped to encourage and support local schools in doing this.'

- (v) The following question was submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4B(c) by member of the public, Natascha Chiles:

"Given the Council has awarded a change to the operator of the outdoor market in Cannock, what measures specifically related to traders' current locations, rent protection, and competition, are the council taking to safeguard the businesses and livelihoods of existing traders to ensure these small businesses are protected in order that they may continue to serve the community of Cannock in the future?"

Councillor G. Alcott, Deputy Leader of the Council and Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader, provided the following response:

"As you may be aware the Cannock Street Market contract has recently been re-tendered with Bescot Promotions Limited being successful and appointed as the new market operator.

As with the previous street market contract this new contract will also run for 3 years with the option to extend for up to a further 2 years.

From correspondence received, I understand that a number of traders have concerns regarding our need to procure a new street market provider, especially as this changeover could impact on their livelihoods. I appreciate they were happy with the existing market, which was run by Sketts, however the Council is bound by strict procurement rules and hence that is why we needed to retender the contract.

The tender process followed the requirements of the public procurement regulations and was overseen and approved by the Staffordshire County Council procurement team. The evaluation process took into consideration both the quality and cost of submitted bids and the assessment criteria applied equally to all operators submitting a tender. The award of the contract reflects the outcome of that prescribed tender evaluation process.

Overall, the quality questions were set to assess the potential operator's proposals and competence to deliver a street market in Cannock. Rent protection was not part of the quality assessment because this is outside the Council's remit and is a matter between the market provider and each individual trader.

However, over 20% of the quality assessment was based on a question relating to the provision of support to existing and new traders, which included providing business support, advice, dealing with trader issues, poor quality products and hygiene issues.

In addition, Bescot have expressed their desire to support existing traders and where possible honouring existing pitches. Information for any trader interested in running a stall on the street market is available on both the Bescot Promotions and Council websites and includes an option to request an email package of information.

In addition, on Monday 23 November, Bescot set up a marquee in Cannock Town Centre and invited all interested traders to meet with them and sign up to the

relaunched Bescot street market.

Thus, within the rules of the procurement process, the Council has done everything it can to protect the interests of the existing traders and allow the Cannock Street Market to continue to thrive.”

Natascha Chiles asked the following supplementary question:

“As there was no consultation with local businesses on this re-tendered process, will the Council commit in future to not delegate such decision to so few Officers when it affects so many, and to consult all businesses and traders?”

The Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader provided the following response to the supplementary question:

“I cannot guarantee this will take place as there is a procedure set down for the contracts of the street market. Regarding consultation with traders, I see no reason why we couldn’t do so, but this would be for the Council to decide at that time.”

46. Chairman’s Announcements and Correspondence

(i) Fundraising Donations

The Chairman advised that to date, he had received £540 in donations from Members toward his fundraising and thanked those Members for their contributions.

Any Members who wished to donate but had not yet done so were asked to contact the Democratic & Resilience Services Manager.

All monies raised would be distributed at the end of the year to the Chairman’s chosen charity, Liberty Staffordshire.

(ii) Receipt of a Petition

The Chairman advised that the Council had received from Councillor P.M. Hewitt a petition signed by local residents regarding the height of the advertising sign at the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet.

The petition would be referred to the Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader, Councillor T.B. Johnson, for review.

47. Leader’s Announcements and Correspondence

(i) Carbon Literacy Training

The Leader reminded Members that they should contact the Managing Director’s PA to book themselves in for the ‘carbon literacy’ training. Several places were still available for the first cohort scheduled in December.

(ii) Covid-19 Update

The Leader advised that due to the impact of Covid-19. Staffordshire had been at ‘Major Incident’ status since 29 October. During this period, and especially since the second national ‘lockdown’ commenced on 5 November, the Council had prioritised the following:

- Track and Trace (with Staffordshire County Council and Public Health England).
- Supporting Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people, of which there were 4,267 in the District (with Staffordshire County Council, voluntary sector groups and food banks).
- Payments to businesses forced to close and other discretionary payments to support a wider range of businesses.
- Support and advise to businesses to remain open and Covid-19 compliant.
- Maintaining all Council services to the public with the exception of leisure and culture services as they had to be closed from 5 November, and some impact on indoor and outdoor markets due to the ban on non-essential retail.
- Working with all partner agencies as part of the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum across a wide range of issues.

The Leader was then pleased to report that the Covid-19 seven-day case rates were reducing as a result of compliance with the lockdown. The case rate for the District for the seven days to 20 November was 247.1 per 100,000 population, this being the lowest case rate in Staffordshire. The same case rate indicator was 353 per 100,000 for the seven days to 16 November, therefore a material reduction could be seen. The testing rate remained higher than the West Midlands average at 497.1 per 100,000 population. There were three high risk locations in the District, of which two were nursing homes. Whilst this was positive news overall, the District rate remained above the England average, so there was further progress to make.

The Leader was not in a position to advise what Covid Alert Level tier the District would exit the national lockdown into on 2 December as there was a national announcement being made on 26 November.

Finally, the Leader hoped all Members would join him in thanking staff at the Council and across the public and voluntary sectors for the huge efforts and commitment being made to contain the virus until such time as a licenced vaccine was freely available.

(iii) Free Car Parking on Saturdays in December

The Leader advised that as Members may recall during his Leader's speech to Council on 12 February 2020, he announced that for 2020, the Administration would suspend car parking charges in all Council car parks for the two Saturdays before Christmas (12 and 19 December 2020).

Given the second national lockdown, which was due to be lifted on 2 December, the Leader announced that this offer of free car parking in all of the Council owned car parks would be extended to include Saturday 5 December also.

Offering free car parking on all of the Saturdays leading up to Christmas would hopefully encourage residents to return safely to the District's town centres and high streets and support the local businesses who had suffered financially throughout this dreadful pandemic.

(iv) **Food Justice Champion**

The Leader advised that over 8 million people in the UK were food insecure, and Cannock Chase as a district was no different. He wanted the Council to work with partner organisations, both voluntary and statutory in a more coordinated way, not just during the pandemic, with a view to setting up a food partnership. Food justice is about taking action on the causes of hunger, which is availability and affordability of good nutritious food. Local Councils and local communities played a key role during the pandemic.

The Leader, therefore, intended to give the Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing the lead for delivering food justice in the District as the Council's Food Justice Champion. The relevant Scrutiny Committee would also be asked to investigate the extent of food poverty in the District and see what can be done to tackle through the development of a Food Action Plan to address the causes of food poverty in the District.

48. Changes to Membership of Committees etc. 2020/21

The Leader of the Council, Councillor G. Adamson, notified Council of changes to membership of the Constitution Working Group from the Labour Group for approval by Council (Item 7.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the changes to the Labour Group's membership of the Constitution Working Group, as detailed in Item 7.1 of the agenda, be approved.

49. Questions Received under Council Procedure Rule 8

No Questions under Council Procedure Rule 8 were received.

50. Recommendations Referred from Cabinet, Committees etc.

Consideration was given to the following recommendation to Council, made by Cabinet at its meeting held on 12 November 2020, in respect of:

2019/20 Infrastructure Funding Statement (draft Minute No. 46)

"That Council be recommended to adopt the annual infrastructure funding statement for the financial year 2019/20, as attached at Appendix 1 to the 12 November 2020 Cabinet report, and that it be approved for publication on the Council's website."

(Councillor Andrea Layton sought clarification with regard to an apparent omission in the document: [page 7 – Regulation 59F] referred to unparished areas but excluded Cannock North. Councillor wondered if this was intentional. The Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader confirmed that it was an oversight and the matter would be rectified.)

RESOLVED:

That (subject to the above amendment):

The annual infrastructure funding statement 2019/20, as attached as Appendix 1 to the 12 November 2020 Cabinet report, be adopted, and published on the Council's website.

51. Motions Received under Council Procedure Rule 6

- (i) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor Mrs. C. Mitchell, Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader:

“Council will be aware that we retained all six Green Flag awards in Cannock Chase again this year with a special award for Castle Ring. It is becoming increasingly obvious how important our green spaces, parks and leisure facilities are for our health and wellbeing, mental and physical.

Due to Covid our leisure facilities have come under increased financial pressure due to closures and with cancellations of memberships and lack of public confidence. It is also reported that one in four community clubs state that they will close, with more than half of those most at risk located in deprived areas.

Health conditions such as diabetes and obesity, which we have major problems with in Cannock Chase, can be managed and prevented through physical activity, but lockdown highlighted that not everyone has access to a garden, online classes or parks and open spaces.

As facilities reopen we must work as Councillors and play a key role in articulating sport and physical activity’s contribution to national and local priorities, such as reducing obesity, mitigating climate change, high street regeneration and reducing pressures on adult social care service.

I know that the Managing Director has written to the Member of Parliament for Cannock Chase already. I move further that he write to the Secretary of State to express the urgency for an emergency funding package for this Council, so that our parks, open spaces and leisure facilities can continue to be kept to the standard that our residents want and deserve.”

Councillor A.M. Muckley moved the following amendment, which was seconded:

“At the end of the Motion, insert the following wording:

This Council further resolves to ask the Cabinet at their next meeting to review the boardwalks and bridges in Rawnsley Woods, Anglesey Nature Reserve and the Rugeley Boardwalk along with the other nine identified sites to see whether allowance can be made in the current budget for their repair / replacement and to report back to full Council.”

The amendment was not accepted by Councillor Mrs. C.M. Mitchell for inclusion in the Motion.

Councillor Ms. C.L. Wilkinson joined the meeting during the debate on the amendment.

The meeting was adjourned for a break at 7:15pm and resumed at 7:20pm

Due to the amendment not being accepted by Councillor Mrs. C.M. Mitchell, a vote was taken, and the amendment approved.

Councillor C. Bennett lost connection prior to the vote on the amendment, but rejoined the meeting following the vote.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Managing Director write to the Secretary of State to express the urgency for an emergency funding package for this Council, so that our parks, open spaces and leisure facilities could continue to be kept to the standards that our residents wanted and deserved.
- (B) This Council further resolves to ask the Cabinet at their next meeting to review the boardwalks and bridges in Rawnsley Woods, Anglesey Nature Reserve and the Rugeley Boardwalk along with the other nine identified sites to see whether allowance can be made in the current budget for their repair / replacement and to report back to full Council.

(ii) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor A.M. Muckley, Member for Rawnsley Ward:

“A recently convened appeal panel requested that this motion is brought before Council in light of some concerns that arose as part of the appeal.

Consequently, this Council notes that a clear and fair complaints process is needed, particularly with regards to Stage Three complaints.

Therefore this Council:

- Resolves to ensure a best practice complaints procedure.
- Proposes that a cross-party working group is formed to fully discuss best practice for Stage Three complaints.
- That the findings of the working group be reported back to full Council.”

RESOLVED:

That:

- The Council resolves to ensure a best practice complaints procedure.
- A cross-party working group be formed to fully discuss best practice for Stage Three complaints.
- The findings of the working group be reported back to full Council.”

(iii) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor Miss O. Lyons, Leader of the Opposition:

“The devastating consequences of Climate Change need no explanation; we are surrounded by evidence of the unwelcome changes to our environment. In July 2019, this Council committed to become net carbon neutral by 2030. Indeed, councillors receive an update on that commitment only last week.

Climate Change is complex and to reach carbon neutrality, we must develop a multifaceted approach. The problem is complicated, contributory factors are entwined into modern life and, sadly, there is no silver bullet. Yet one thing is simple, we must act now.

We live in Cannock Chase and have an entire forest on our doorstep. We are lucky because every tree helps but we must not use this to lessen our own level of

responsibility. We could go further in and around our towns and strive to make a larger impact.

Planting trees is one of the cheapest, most cost-effective means of reducing carbon.

- Trees purify the air and a single tree can absorb almost 1 tonne of carbon during its lifetime;
- A single tree can provide enough oxygen for two people per year;
- Trees support our environment, protect wildlife and help restore vital habitats;
- They help our own wellbeing and mental health by allowing us to take a moment to enjoy the great outdoors.

Science supports the amazing benefits of ‘afforestation’, or simply put ‘planting more trees’. Nationally, there is a range of tree planting schemes and the Forestry Commission’s report ‘Government supported new planting of trees in England’ released in June 2020 confirms that 1,956 hectares, or 3,281,000 trees were planted in 2019/2020 as a result.

Elsewhere, local authorities are embarking upon more localised initiatives and utilising schemes such as the Government’s ‘Woodland Carbon Fund’ which provides capital funding for Council’s to create new green, wooded areas.

It should be recognised that this Council have in the past planted trees alongside the Countryside Volunteers and Staffordshire Wildlife and have a remove one, replace one policy. Cannock Chase District Council’s own Urban Forestry Strategy identifies and promotes community involvement in both tree management and tree planting. I have received requests from community groups who wish to help locally by planting trees themselves. We should be enabling tree planting projects as they bring together communities, encourage residents to spend time outdoors and, longer term, help us to fight Climate Change.

I was therefore disappointed to find a stumbling block – this Council does not have a ‘land bank’ or indeed any areas that have been surveyed, prepared and protected for tree planting. Given the increasing development in the area, I feel strongly that land should be protected for this purpose.

I understand the financial pressures this Council faces and I know that it is not always as simple as planting trees. There will be costs, such as planting materials, ground preparation, fencing and ongoing maintenance, but we cannot ignore the cost to our planet by postponing this action.

I propose that this Council begins to look at identifying a ‘land bank’ for the purpose of planting trees, assessing the potential cost to the Council and further explore the various funding opportunities and incentives on offer.”

Councillor J.A.A. Newbury moved the following amendment, which was seconded:

“Delete final paragraph of the motion and replace with:

I propose that as part of the emerging Local Plan, this Council commits to identifying suitable sites which can be transformed into a woodland habitat with species appropriate to Cannock Chase’s landscape.

Furthermore, officers of the Council should, in due course, produce a report on potential options for sites and explore the various funding opportunities on offer,

including lobbying our Member of Parliament for a share of central government funding for tree planting.”

The amendment was accepted by Councillor Miss O. Lyons.

RESOLVED:

That

- (A) As part of the emerging Local Plan, the Council commits to identifying suitable sites which could be transformed into a woodland habitat with species appropriate to Cannock Chase’s landscape.
- (B) Furthermore, officers of the Council should, in due course, produce a report on potential options for sites and explore the various funding opportunities on offer, including lobbying our Member of Parliament for a share of central government funding for tree planting.

- (iv) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor B. Jones, Community Safety and Partnerships Shadow Portfolio Leader:

“This motion proposes that council directs the Managing Director of CCDC, Mr Tony McGovern to write to the Minister for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Kwasi Kwartang MP, requesting a change in legislation relating to the sale and use of fireworks.

This motion has been prepared based on the research undertaken by the RSPCA and contained within its report titled ‘Bang out of Order’. For those wishing to read the report in detail, please follow the below link:

<https://www.rspca.org.uk/documents/1494939/0/Bang+out+of+order+-+fireworks+frighten+animals+%28PDF+706KB%29.pdf/ebcfb65c-40f4-58a0-88d2-0896845a3127?t=1571669349793>

We are all aware that the use of fireworks has substantially increased in recent years. What was once a yearly occurrence shortly before and on bonfire night has now become a year-round event. As well as the lead up to bonfire night, fireworks are now routinely used during the New Year, Diwali, Chinese New Year, Birthdays, Weddings and other celebrations. Whilst many people enjoy fireworks, sadly this has led to an increase in anti-social behaviour and considerable distress being caused to domestic pets, horses, farm animals and other wildlife.

Fireworks can be a source of fear and distress for many animals, particularly the sudden, loud noises. For example, it is estimated that 45 percent of dogs show signs of fear when they hear fireworks and a New Zealand survey recorded 79 percent of horses as either anxious or very anxious around fireworks over the period of Bonfire Night. Animals affected not only suffer psychological distress but can also cause themselves injuries, sometimes very serious ones as they attempt to run or hide from the noise.

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic has also affected many people causing increased isolation and mental health issues. The constant impact of fireworks being discharged has the potential to have a detrimental effect on many people’s wellbeing. Many councillors share the concerns of many pet owners, farmers and other people who are adversely affected by the constant use of fireworks and hope

that members across the chamber do too.

There is already a range of legislation regulating the sale, display and safety of fireworks. The Fireworks Act 2003 and the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (as amended) are the main pieces concerned with regulating fireworks usage in England, Scotland and Wales.

The 2003 Act was introduced with the aim of reducing the noise, nuisance and injuries caused by the misuse of fireworks. Section 2 of the Act conferred powers on the Secretary of State to make regulations to ensure there is no, or minimal, risk that fireworks will cause death, injury, alarm, distress or anxiety to people, or death, injury or distress to animals, and destruction of or damage to property. The main relevant provisions of the 2004 Regulations provide:

1. A prohibition of the possession of fireworks in a public place by anyone under the age of 18 years (Regulation 4).
2. A curfew on the use of fireworks between 11pm and 7am (though this starts later November 5th) (12 midnight), New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali (1 am)) (Regulation 7).
3. A ban on the possession of category 4 fireworks (i.e. those whose noise level exceeds 120 dB) by the public (Regulation 5).
4. A prohibition of the supply of excessively loud category 3 fireworks (i.e. over 120 dB) (Regulation 8).
5. A ban on the sale of fireworks to private individuals outside of certain dates 15th October-10th November, 26th-31st December, three days before Diwali and Chinese New Year, unless from certain licensed shops (Regulation 9).
6. An exception to these prohibitions is for professionals who use fireworks in their work (for example putting on professional displays, special effects in theatre, film or television, etc) (Regulation 6).

Schedule 1 of the Pyrotechnic Articles (Safety) Regulations 2015 also sets out a categorisation system for fireworks in the UK. Category F1, F2 and F3 fireworks must not exceed a maximum noise level of 120 dB. The report by the RSPCA as highlighted above gives further details on noise levels and the type of firework in each category.

This is an issue that resonates with people and thousands of RSPCA supporters and the wider public have significant concerns about fireworks. For example, in 2016 over 104,000 people signed an e-petition calling for tighter regulation of fireworks and in 2017 a further e-petition was supported by over 113,000 people. In 2018, in less than four weeks 330,000 people signed a petition on the matter. It is clear there is very strong public feeling on this situation.

As stated, it is clear from the available information that fireworks can impact negatively on animals as well as people. The RSPCA believes the law is failing as it does not prevent or reduce the risk of fireworks causing distress or anxiety to people or death, injury or distress to animals. They believe that updating the law would improve the situation for animals and people. Many councillors agree with this view and support all the recommendations highlighted in the RSPCA report. These are as follows:

1. **Limit the public sale and use of fireworks to on or close to specific dates**

and times. The RSPCA supports the current restrictions on the sale of fireworks to the public on or close to agreed traditional dates, i.e. November 5th, New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali. These dates are already recognised as being exceptional in the Regulations and we believe that the existing prohibition on sales at all other times could and should be extended to include use as well. We believe this could be enforced by a licensing system for private displays outside of these dates (see point 4 below).

2. **Tighter restrictions on the sale of fireworks in the run up to November 5th.** We feel that tighter restrictions should be placed on the sale of fireworks in the run up to November 5th. At present they can be sold from 15th October through to 10th November, whereas the restrictions for the sale of fireworks for the other traditional dates are much tighter. Based on the experience of New Zealand we believe the sales permission should be limited to 29th October through to 5th November.
3. **Reduce the maximum noise level of fireworks available to the public and ensure they are labelled accurately.** We would like to see the maximum permitted noise level of fireworks for public sale (i.e. those that fall within categories F1, F2 or F3) reduced from 120 dB to 90 dB and the introduction of a labelling system identifying the noise level of fireworks (e.g. 'loud' or 'low noise') to allow consumers to make an informed decision. Setting the limit at 90 dB would be consistent with the approach in other countries and encourage manufacturers to design and produce quieter fireworks.
4. **Licensing of all public fireworks displays.** We would like to see all public fireworks displays licensed by the relevant licensing authority, with information about the proposed display provided in the local area several weeks in advance (allowing mitigating measures to be put in place) and a process for local residents to appeal against the granting of the licence. This process should also apply to people seeking to hold private displays at special events (such as weddings). The licensing process should require due consideration of the potential negative impact on animals and, where possible, mitigation measures to reduce this impact.
5. **Raising awareness.** In addition to changes in the law, we believe there is a real need to raise awareness amongst pet owners about fireworks phobia and that it can be treated (in dogs at least) in the long term, rather than being something that they and their pets have to suffer every year. The importance of needing to prepare themselves and their pets in advance in order to be most effective, rather than just before the fireworks season occurs also needs to be emphasised and could have a significant benefit to dogs and their owners. In addition, there is a need to raise awareness about the impact of fireworks on animals to the wider public to encourage them to be more considerate of pets, horses and livestock as well as local wildlife.
6. **Further research is needed to properly understand the impact of fireworks noise on animals.** We have reached our position based on the limited research we have identified but acknowledge that there is a need to have a better understanding of the impact of fireworks noise (including the contribution of factors such as loudness and audio spectrum frequencies produced) on animal welfare, so that future developments can be more effectively informed.

In conclusion, this District Council already has a very robust anti-social behaviour policy. By working in conjunction with Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service this authority will continue to act against those individuals who use fireworks illegally or inconsiderately. This motion is intended to compliment that strategy and tighten the law still further, I commend it to all members of this council.”

Councillor C. Bennett lost and regained connection to the meeting during the debate on the motion.

RESOLVED:

That the Managing Director write to the Minister for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Kwasi Kwartang MP, requesting a change in legislation relating to the sale and use of fireworks.

- (v) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor A.S. Boucker, Member for Western Springs Ward:

“The Coronavirus pandemic has made a lot of necessary changes in our lifestyle, work and politics. Cannock Chase Council officers and staff have risen to this challenge remarkably in every way, and Councillors too have played their part by continuing to host and participate in meetings and committees via video. Also, by broadcasting those parts appropriate to the public.

The public of Cannock Chase have a right to attend meetings, and to see their councillors representing them. We must accept that with Cannock Chase being such a wide area, it is sometimes not possible for people to attend meetings, and as such, they miss a basic right to see their local representatives.

Having been forced to broadcast our meetings due to current restrictions we have had a chance to see that more people are engaging with us and watching us online than do in the chamber. We can only expect this number to grow as more people become aware that we are broadcasting. The Conservative Group believe that this engagement should be encouraged after lockdown when we re-enter the chamber.

The Conservative Group propose:

- 1) That Cannock Chase District Council resolve to continue broadcasting meetings for as long as lockdown is in place.
- 2) That a review be undertaken, to both the cost and feasibility of placing several cameras within the council chamber to broadcast meetings of council online.
- 3) That consideration is given to allowing access to all councillors (or elected groups that require them) to allow them to broadcast on their own social media, or websites.”

Councillor Mrs C.M. Martin moved the following amendment, which was seconded:

“That 1) be deleted, and 2) and 3) replaced with:

The matter be referred to Cabinet for a feasibility study to be undertaken to look at the cost of broadcasting Council meetings.”

Councillor A.S. Boucker accepted the amendment.

RESOLVED:

That the matter be referred to the Cabinet for a feasibility study to be undertaken to look at the cost of broadcasting Council meetings.

- (vi) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor A.S. Boucker, Member for Western Springs Ward:

“The outbreak of Covid-19 has impacted and changed many aspects of our life; the way we work, the way we conduct business, and, particularly at the moment, the way we enjoy our social and private life. I am sure that we would all agree that the staff of this Council, both those employed directly and indirectly, have risen remarkably to the task and challenges at hand and have managed to maintain the great standards of service that our officers deliver.

While we would like to be able to go further than this, the Conservative Group feel that a gesture of appreciation should be made to all directly employed Council staff. Therefore, the Conservative Group put forward that a letter be written to all staff directly employed by the Council explaining our gratitude for their efforts during these incredible times. The cost of this letter should be covered by a donation from all councillors, meaning that there is no direct cost to this Council or the Taxpayer.

While we appreciate that this is a small gesture, it is at times like these that small gestures of appreciation and gratitude go the furthest.”

Councillor G. Adamson moved the following amendment, which was seconded:

“At the end of the Motion, insert the following wording:

The Council resolves to write to our MP demanding that she opposes the public sector pay freeze. The Council recognises and appreciates the work done by public sector staff throughout the country to keep our residents safe during the pandemic and feels strongly that they deserve better than to have a real terms cut in their wages as a reward.”

The amendment was not accepted by Councillor A.S. Boucker for inclusion in the Motion.

Due to the amendment not being accepted by Councillor A.S. Boucker, a vote was taken, and the amendment approved.

Additionally, it was noted that the letter should be sent from the Council; and it should also be sent to non-directly employed staff, such as those working for Biffa and IHL who supported delivery of the Council’s services.

It was also confirmed that the donation to cover the costs would be on a voluntary basis.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) A letter be written to all staff directly employed by the Council, as well as those employed by Biffa and IHL, explaining Members’ gratitude for their efforts during these incredible times. The cost of the letter should be covered by Councillors, on a voluntary basis, meaning that there was no direct cost to the Council or the

Taxpayer.

- (B) The Council resolves to write to our MP demanding that she opposes the public sector pay freeze. The Council recognises and appreciates the work done by public sector staff throughout the country to keep our residents safe during the pandemic and feels strongly that they deserve better than to have a real term cut in their wages as a reward.

(vii) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor J.A.A. Newbury, Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader:

“This Council notes that:

- The current process of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate is onerous, intrusive and can be distressing for those having to undergo it.
- Transgender people have been calling for the right to self-identify their own gender for many years.
- Many countries already allow for self-identification, including Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Belgium, Norway and Argentina.
- The Minister for Women and Equalities pledged to look into this issue and held a National LGBT Survey in 2018 which received more than 100,000 responses.
- Despite the survey demonstrating widespread support for self-identification, the Minister indicated in September 2020 that this reform would not be pursued.
- The Government is instead proposing to lower the £140 fee to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate and move the process online.

This Council believes that:

- Transgender people have a right to self-declare their own gender and have this officially recognised by government at all levels.
- Transgender people have waited long enough for reform of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 and are tired of their status being debated in the public sphere.
- Local government should do what it can to support the right of transgender people to have their gender recorded as they see fit.

This Council resolves to:

- Ask the Managing Director to write to the Minister for Women and Equalities to affirm the Council’s support for self-identification and request that the Government Equalities Office reconsider its stance on this.
- Conduct a review into the information it collects on the gender of residents, tenants and staff and present a report to Cabinet on the practical implications of allowing self-identification.”

Councillor S.K. Crabtree moved the following amendment, which was seconded:

Gender recognition is an issue that affects the whole transgender community. I believe that the Motion should go further and include all of those for whom gender

recognition had been a struggle; mainly non-binary and intersex individuals and the wording of the Motion be amended to include these groups.

Councillor Crabtree said that Would also challenge why gender information is collected at all when accessing Council services and would amend the Motion to seek to remove the collection of gender data unless a compelling case can be made for doing so.

Councillor Newbury advised that the Gender Recognition Act did not currently include non-binary or intersex individuals. Did Councillor Crabtree wish the letter to the Minister to also ask her to also take account of other (non-binary) gender identities.

The amendment was accepted by Councillor J.A.A. Newbury

Councillor Miss O. Lyons moved the following further amendment, which was seconded:

With regard to the second part of the Motion, that it be amended to:

“The review be undertaken and prioritised by Councillors within the relevant Scrutiny Committee rather than adding an additional task to the workload of Officers.”

The amendment was not accepted by Councillor J.A.A. Newbury for inclusion in the motion.

Due to the amendment not being accepted by Councillor J.A.A Newbury, a vote was taken, and the amendment was lost.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Managing Director write to the Minister for Women and Equalities to affirm the Council’s support for self-identification, including non-binary individuals, and request that the Government Equalities Office reconsider its stance on this.
- (B) A review be conducted into the information collected by the Council on the gender of residents, tenants and staff and a report presented to Cabinet on the practical implications of allowing self-identification.

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

No comments or questions on Part 1 Minutes had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

53. Annual Treasury Management Report 2019/20

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Finance (Item 12.1 – 12.13 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Annual Treasury Management report for 2019/20 be noted.
- (B) The actual 2019/20 prudential and treasury indicators, as set out in Appendix 1

of the report, be approved.

54. Review of Licensing Policy

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 13.1 – 13.45 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The revised Licensing Policy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and adopted.
- (B) The Head of Economic Prosperity be authorised to make any amendments to the Policy required due to changes in legislation or government guidance and minor variations to the Policy in the interests of operational efficiency.

55. Comments and Questions on Part 2 Minutes of Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels under Rule 9

No comments or questions on Part 2 Minutes had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

The meeting closed at 9:32 p.m., and the Chairman took the opportunity to wish Councillors and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

CHAIRMAN

Report of:	Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Matt Berry
Contact Number:	01543 464 589
Portfolio Leader:	Leader of the Council
Key Decision:	No
Report Track:	Council: 20/01/21

Council
20 January 2021
Review of the Members' Allowances Scheme

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 For Council to consider the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel ('the Panel') in relation to the Panel's latest review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Council considers the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as outlined in paragraph 5.2 of this report, and approves a revised Scheme to come into effect from 1 April 2021.

3 Key Issues and Reasons for Recommendations

Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council is required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to have a Members' Allowances Scheme in place and to keep it reviewed on a regular basis.
- 3.2 Aside from the statutory requirement, it is important to review the Scheme regularly to ensure that the allowances paid are appropriate to reflect both the 'Council based' roles (e.g. Cabinet members, committee chairs etc.) and 'community leadership' roles that Members have.
- 3.2 As part of considering the Panel's recommendations, Members' will also need to be mindful of the impact the proposals could have on the relevant budget, details of which are provided in paragraph 6.1.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.3 The Members' Allowances Scheme was last reviewed in early 2018, with the updated Scheme being approved by full Council in May that year. The current Scheme covers the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021. Therefore, it has been necessary to conduct a fresh review and seek Members' approval for a new Scheme to come into effect from 1 April 2021.

4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 This report supports the Council's corporate priorities by seeking to ensure that persons who elect to stand for office as a local councillor are not financially disadvantaged from doing so, by providing them with appropriate levels of allowances to carry out the various roles available.

5 Report Detail

- 5.1 The final report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which sets out how their review into the Members' Allowances Scheme was conducted and the recommendations made from it, is attached at **Appendix 1** for consideration.
- 5.2 For ease of reference, the Panel's recommendations are as follows:
- That:
- (a) The Basic, Special Responsibility and Civic Allowances be frozen at the 2020/21 rates for 2021/22.
 - (b) No change be made be made to the rates payable under the Communications, Carers', Travel and Subsistence Allowances.
 - (c) The revised Scheme be in place for 1 year (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022), with a further review to be undertaken later in 2021.
- 5.3 A copy of the current Scheme is attached as **Appendix 2**, which sets out the allowances rates payable for the 2020/21 financial year.

6 Implications

6.1 Financial

Any changes to the number and / or amount of allowances payable will have to be met from within the allocated budget for Members' allowances / expenses.

The budgetary implications of the Panel's recommendations would be:

Members' Allowances Budget 2020/21	£368,280
Indicative Members Allowances Budget 2021/22	£375,650
Saving on 2021/22 budget if Allowances frozen at 2020/21 rates	£7,370

6.2 Legal

Under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to:

- Adopt a Members' Allowances Scheme that must be in force on at least an annual basis.
- Establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to review said Scheme on a regular basis.
- Have regard to any reports or recommendations of the Panel when adopting a new or revised Scheme.
- Publicise any recommendations made by the Panel.
- Publicise details of the Scheme once it has been revised or newly adopted.
- Ensure an accurate record is kept of the total amounts of allowances paid to each Member and the types of allowances paid.

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Risk Management

None.

6.5 Equality & Diversity

None.

6.6 Climate Change

None.

7 Appendices to the Report

Appendix 1: Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Appendix 2: Current Members' Allowances Scheme (as at 25 August 2020).

Previous Consideration

Previous reviews of the Scheme have taken place at least every two years, or when required.

Background Papers

Members' Allowances Review Pack – December 2020.

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Review of Cannock Chase Council's Members' Allowances Scheme

December 2020

Introduction

We present to Council the final report of the Independent Remuneration Panel arising out of our latest review of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The membership of the Panel for the latest review was:

- Mrs. K. Holtham – returning Panel member; appointed December 2017.
- Mr G. Marsh – returning Panel member, first appointed February 2014.
- Mr A. Showell – returning Panel member, appointed December 2017.

Previous Panel member, Mr J. Derry, stood down from the Panel prior to the commencement of the latest review. Mr Derry had served on the Panel since March 2006, and we thank him for his work on the Panel over the past 14 years.

We are residents of the District with a variety of employment backgrounds and have been re-appointed to serve on the Panel from December 2020 to December 2023.

During the review process we were supported by Ian Curran, Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer and Matt Berry, Democratic Services Team Leader.

Review Process

Prior to our first meeting, we were issued with a 'Members' Allowances Review Pack', which included the following information/data:

- Background information
- Members' Allowances comparator data
- Meetings attendances figures – May 2019 to November 2020
- Committee meeting held/scheduled – May 2019 to November 2020
- Members' Allowances survey results
- Functions, Responsibilities and Structures of Committees and Chief Officers
- Current Members' Allowances scheme.

Meeting 1 – 17 December 2020

We discussed the information and data provided in the review pack, particularly noting the levels of allowances paid to Cannock Chase District Councillors compared to those of the other local authorities referenced in the pack and the feedback provided by those Members who completed the review survey. We also discussed the work of the Scrutiny Committees and how they had changed since the previous review took place.

Conclusions

In deciding whether to make any change to the Scheme, we were particularly mindful that the Basic, Special Responsibility and Civic Allowances had been increased for the three-year period 2018 to 2021 by a combined total of 6.75% (2% each in years 1 and 2, and 2.75% in year), in line with increases in Officers' pay for that same period.

This was considered alongside the current economic climate of the UK as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, noting that nationally, many MPs had spoken out against receiving a proposed increase in their salaries for 2021.

We also looked at the feedback provided by Members as part of the survey conducted in September 2020. This showed that whilst a majority of Members who responded were in favour of allowances being index linked to changes in Officers' pay rates (as per the existing arrangements), others preferred to see the rates frozen at the current levels, or in some cases, decreased.

Taking into account all of the above, we determined that at this time, it was appropriate to recommend that all allowances be frozen at 2020/21 rates for a 12-month period (i.e. 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) and that a further review of the Scheme be undertaken later in 2021 once the economic impact of the pandemic was better known.

Panel's Recommendations

Scheme Area and (Current Allowance Paid)	Recommendations
Length of Scheme (3 years)	1 year, with a further review later in 2021
Basic Allowance (£5,706)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Leader of the Council (£19,403)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Deputy Leader of the Council (£9,903)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Councillors of Cabinet (£8,578)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Leader of the Opposition (£7,260)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Chairman of Planning Control Committee (£4,619)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees (£2,138)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Chairman of Licensing & Public Protection Committee (£1,982)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Chairman of Audit & Governance Committee (£1,982)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Councillors of Shadow Cabinet (£1,282)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Chairman of the Council (£9,559)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Vice-Chairman of the Council (£3,767)	Frozen at 2020/21 rates
Communications Allowance (£400 per year)	No change

Scheme Area and (Current Allowance Paid)	Recommendations
Carers' Allowances (National Minimum Wage Rates)	No change
Travel Allowances (Same as rates paid to officers)	No change
Subsistence Allowances (Same as rates paid to officers)	No change

K. Holtham
G, Marsh
A. Showell

Independent Remuneration Panel
17 December 2020

Section 42

Members' Allowance

Scheme 2018-21

This document contains the scheme for Councillors' Allowances as approved by the Council for the period 1 April, 2018 to 31 March, 2021. Any amendment to the scheme requires the approval of the Council.

Contents

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Scheme, which may be cited as the Cannock Chase Council Members' Allowances Scheme, was approved by Cannock Chase Council at its meeting on 23 May, 2018 in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 1.2 This Scheme replaces all previous Members' Allowances Schemes.
- 1.3 The Allowances mentioned in this scheme shall be implemented with effect from 1 April, 2018 and shall run until 31 March, 2021.
- 1.4 Any other amendments to the Scheme will be solely determined by the Council, following receipt of recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

2. Explanation of Terms

- 2.1 In this scheme,

“Councillor” means a Councillor of Cannock Chase Council.

“Year” means the 12 months commencing from the Council’s Annual General Meeting

3. Basic Allowance

- 3.1 Subject to paragraph 6, for each year a basic allowance shall be paid to each Councillor, in accordance with the table at Schedule 1 to include a notional allowance for the provision of stationery, postage and indemnity insurance.
- 3.2 The Basic Allowance shall be increased by 2% for 2018/19 and index linked to any percentage changes in NJC Officer pay rates for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

4. Special Responsibility Allowances

- 4.1 For each year a special responsibility allowance, comprising component elements to be agreed by the Council, may be paid to those Councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the authority that are specified in Schedule 1 to this scheme provided that a signed request form has been received by the Managing Director from the Councillor confirming their wish to receive a special responsibility allowance.
- 4.2 Subject to paragraph 6, the amount of each such element shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that schedule.
- 4.3 With the exception of those Councillors in receipt of a Civic Allowance, Councillors shall be entitled to only one special responsibility allowance, with the single highest allowance being paid. Those Councillors in receipt of a Civic Allowance shall also be entitled to a special responsibility allowance, where appropriate.

- 4.4 As with the Basic Allowance, all Special Responsibility Allowances and Civic Allowances shall be increased by 2% for 2018/19 and index linked to any percentage changes in NJC Officer pay rates for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

5. Renunciation

- 5.1 A Councillor may give notice in writing to the Managing Director to elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this scheme. For clarification, this may include entitlement to an annual increase.
- 5.2 A Councillor must give notice in writing to the Managing Director to elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement, including any increases in Basic, Special Responsibility or Civic allowances payable under this Scheme. Any such requests must also specify the rate of Basic, Special Responsibility or Civic allowance the Councillor concerned wishes to continue receiving (where applicable).

6. Part-Year Entitlements

- 6.1 The provisions of this paragraph shall have effect to regulate the entitlements of a Councillor to basic and special responsibility allowances where in the course of a year, this scheme is amended or that Councillor becomes, or ceases to be, a Councillor, or accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility in respect of which a special responsibility is payable.

- 6.2 If an amendment to this scheme changes the amount to which a Councillor is entitled by way of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance, then in relation to each of the periods:

- (a) beginning with the year and ending with the day before that on which the first amendment in that year takes effect, or
- (b) beginning with the day on which an amendment takes effect and ending with the day before that on which the next amendment takes effect, or (if none) with the year,

the entitlement to such an allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the amount of the allowance under this scheme as it has effect during the relevant period as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days in the period bears to the number of days in the year.

- 6.3 If an amendment to this scheme changes the duties specified in schedule 2 to this scheme, the entitlement to an allowance shall be to the payment of the amount of the allowance under the scheme as it has effect when the duty is carried out.

- 6.4 Where the term of office of a Councillor begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year, the entitlement of that Councillor to a basic allowance shall be to the payment to such part of the basic allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which his/her term of office subsists bears to the number of days in that year.

- 6.5 Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph 6.2, and the term of office of a Councillor does not subsist throughout the period mentioned in sub-

paragraph 6.2(a), the entitlement of any such Councillor to a basic allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which his/her term of office as a Councillor subsists bears to the number of days in that period.

- 6.6 Where a Councillor has during part of, but not throughout, a year such special responsibilities as entitle him or her to a special responsibility allowance, that Councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of that allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which he has such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that year.
- 6.7 Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph 6.2, and a Councillor has during part, but does not have throughout the whole, of any period mentioned in sub-paragraph 6.2(a) of that paragraph any such special responsibilities as entitle him or her to a special responsibility allowance, that Councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of the allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole same proportion as the number of days in that period during which he or she has such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that period.

7. Suspension or Partial Suspension of Councillors

- 7.1 Where a Councillor or Independent Member is suspended or partially suspended from responsibilities or duties as a member of the Council in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the part of the allowance payable (including travel and subsistence allowances) in respect of the period of suspension or partial suspension may be withheld by the Council.
- 7.2 Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which the member is concerned is:
- (i) suspended or partially suspended from responsibilities or duties as described above;
 - (ii) ceases to be a Member of the Council; or
 - (iii) is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowances in respect of that period,

the Council may require that such part of the allowance as they relate to any such period be repaid to the Council.

8. Travel and Subsistence

- 8.1 Payment of allowances for travel and subsistence are not payable under this Scheme, but Councillors shall be entitled to receive payments by way of travelling allowance or subsistence allowance under the provisions of Section 174 of the Local Government Act, 1972, in connection with performing any of the approved duties set out in Annex 1 to this Scheme. The amounts of such payments and limits and conditions relating to them are set out in Annex 2 to this Scheme.

8.2 Such allowances will be payable at the same rates as those which can be claimed by Officers.

9. Travel and Subsistence Outside of the U.K.

9.1 Payment of travel and subsistence allowances for official duties outside the United Kingdom are not payable under the Scheme, but travelling and subsistence allowances are payable under Section 174 of the Local Government Act, 1972 and are detailed in Annex 3.

10. Claims and Payments

10.1 Payments shall be made:-

- (a) in respect of basic and special responsibility allowances, in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme on the 25th of each month (20th December) by bank credit transfer (BACS);
- (b) in respect of travel and subsistence expenses, on the 25th of the month (20th December) following submission by a Councillor provided that submission is made to the Managing Director by the 7th day of that month.

Where the 25th/20th falls on a non-banking day, payment will be made on the last banking day before.

10.2 Where a payment of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme in respect of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance would result in the Councillor receiving more than the amount to which, by virtue of paragraph 6, he or she is entitled, the payment shall be restricted to such an amount as will ensure that no more is paid than the amount to which he or she is entitled.

11. Publicity

11.1 Details of this scheme will be publicised within the Authority's area as soon as possible after the Council has agreed or amended the scheme.

11.2 As soon as practicable after the end of the year the Authority shall make arrangements for the publication, within the Authority's area, of the total payments of each allowance made to Councillors in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Local Authorities (Councillors Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

Schedule 1

Basic, Special Responsibility and Other Allowances

Basic Allowance

The Basic Allowance for 2020/21 is £5,706 of which £1,224 is included in this sum for the purchase of consumables by Councillors, such as stationery, postage and the provision of indemnity insurance for work on outside bodies, which shall be arranged by each individual Councillor as they see fit.

Special Responsibility Allowances and Civic Allowances

Special Responsibility Allowances and Civic Allowances for 2020/21 shall be paid as follows:

Special Responsibility Allowances:	2020/21
Leader of the Council (x1)	£19,403
Deputy Leader of the Council (x1)	£9,903
Councillors of Cabinet (x7)	£8,578
Leader of the Opposition (x1)	£7,260
Chairman of Planning Control Committee (x1)	£4,619
Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees (x4)	£2,138
Chairman of Licensing & Public Protection Committee (x1)	£1,982
Chairman of Audit & Governance Committee (x1)	£1,982
Councillors of Shadow Cabinet (x8)	£1,282
Civic Allowances:	
Chairman of the Council (x1)	£9,559
Vice-Chairman of the Council (x1)	£3,767

The nature of the allowances payable to the Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman are different in nature from the other allowances payable, due to the very much different role played by these Councillors as civic leaders. These are thus payable as “cash” sums, rather than the more salary-like basis of most other allowances.

Independent Members

The payment to Independent Members with decision-making powers, such as those on the Standards Committee and the Independent Remuneration Panel, is £220 per annum.

Communications Allowance

An allowance of £400 will be paid to Councillors in their year of (re-)election, followed by £400 per annum for each of the following three years. This allowance will be paid in instalments of £33.33 per month as a ‘communications allowance’, to cover the cost of; consumables, broadband, telephone line rental and mobile phone usage. All payments are subject to tax.

Carers Allowances

Councillors shall be reimbursed for the actual costs incurred as a result of providing care for children under the age of 14, persons over the age of 60 and people with disabilities or learning difficulties. Reimbursement will be at the National Living Wage rate in force at the time any such claim is made.

The person to be cared for should be someone who normally lives in the claimant's household who cannot be left unsupervised. In addition, the carer employed should not be someone who normally lives with the claimant. The allowance is payable for approved duties only as defined in the Members Allowances Regulations 2003.

Schedule 2 Approved Duties

Approved duties are prescribed as:-

- (a) Attendance of **appointed** Councillors at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and other Council meetings.
- (b) Attendance of **appointed** Councillors at Special Meetings.
- (c) Attendance of **invited** Councillors at meetings.

Note: A payment shall be made only to Councillors invited to attend to participate by the Chairman of the Committee etc., prior to the meeting and whose names are recorded in the Minutes as being present with an indication of the Chairman's reasons for permitting participation.

- (d) Attendance at meetings that relate to the business of the Council i.e. presentations and events whereby all Councillors of the Council are invited to attend.
- (e) Attendance of at least two Group Leaders (or, where only one Group Leader exists, two Councillors) at meetings called by the Managing Director. (Refer to Schedule 2(b))
- (f) Attendance of Councillors appointed to deputations, site visits or like business, where prior approval by the Council/Committee has been granted

Note: Eligible provided that the duty for which the attendance is paid shall have had prior approval by the Committee requiring the duty to be undertaken or, in exceptional circumstances, by the Managing Director after consultation with the Chairman of the Council.

- (g) Attendance at meetings by Councillors of the Cabinet in their capacity as Portfolio Leader.
- (h) Attendance at:-
 - (i) Bodies of national, regional or county standing which carry out directly related Council functions. The Councillor appointed to these bodies must be appointed to 'act' on behalf of the Council, which must form part of the list of bodies approved by Council and Cabinet.

Note: Although not part of this Scheme, attendance at approved Conferences will also qualify for payment of travelling expenses and subsistence under Section 175 of the Local Government Act, 1972. The approved Conferences are:-

- (A) Local Government Association Annual Conference:
Leader of the Council and Managing Director

- (B) Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy:
Leader of the Council and Head of Finance
- (C) Chartered Institute of Housing:
Leader for Housing and Head of Housing and Partnerships
- (D) LGA Economic Regeneration Conference:
Leader for Economic Development & Planning and Head of Economic Prosperity
- (E) Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport & Physical Activity:
Leader for Culture & Sport and Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles

Annex 1

Travel and Subsistence Allowance

Approved duties for the purposes of payment of travelling and subsistence allowances under Section 174 of the Local Government Act, 1972 shall be payable in respect of the following:-

- (a) All Approved Duties for the purposes of the Members' Allowances Scheme referred to in the Second Schedule to the scheme.
- (b) Attendance of Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Council, Cabinet or Committees for Agenda discussion or on business of the Council, Committee or Sub-Committee.
- (c) Attendance of Councillors at Council offices on the business of the Council.
- (d) Attendance of Councillors on courses or seminars approved by the Council, Committee or Sub-Committee.
- (e) Bodies of local standing generally having statutory backing carrying out functions of a consultative nature but not necessarily being directly or indirectly related to local authority work.
- (f) The Executive Committee of the Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association.

Annex 2

Travel and Subsistence Allowances

Travel

Councillors shall be paid car mileage rates in accordance with rates paid to Officers, including any local amendments to national rates. Current rates payable are:

Engine Capacity	451-999cc	Over 1000cc
Claimable rate (pence per mile)	46.9p	52.2p

- (a) If Councillors use a taxi regularly to attend meetings and they live within easy access to a convenient bus route then reimbursement will only be made at the appropriate bus fare rate.
- (b) Journeys from the place of Council meetings to the place of work are considered to be for the purpose of attending work and reimbursement of travelling allowance will not be paid.

Subsistence

Councillors shall be paid subsistence rates in accordance with rates paid to Officers, including any local amendments to national rates. Current rates payable are:

Allowance Type	Maximum Claim Amount
Breakfast	£5.89
Lunch	£8.11
Tea	£3.20
Dinner	£10.04
Overnight Accommodation (Outside London)	£95.60
Overnight Accommodation (London)	£109.03

When refreshments/meals are provided at meetings subsistence should not be claimed.

Other Travel and Subsistence

Councillors shall be paid in accordance with rates paid to Officers, including any local amendments to national rates.

The travel and subsistence allowances should be adjusted annually in line with those paid to Officers.

Note: Claims for travel and subsistence will not be approved unless accompanied with appropriate VAT receipts as proof of the expense being incurred.

Annex 3

Travel and Subsistence Allowances Outside The U.K.

1. For approved duties within the U.K. there are a series of subsistence allowances approved by the Secretary of State, dependent on the location, duration and purpose of the duty.
2. However, the Secretary of State has no jurisdiction to determine subsistence rates abroad and each Local Authority must pay whatever it considers appropriate.
3. Accordingly, the Council has adopted the following scheme for the payment of subsistence on official duty outside the U.K.
4. Councillors of the Council and Officers who are required to undertake official duties outside the U.K. shall be entitled to the following travel and subsistence allowances:
 - (i) Full cost of all travel (to the extent that it is not met directly by the Council) from the Councillor's/Officer's home or office as appropriate to the place of duty, all necessary travel whilst engaged on the duty and return, such costs to be supported by appropriate receipts.
 - (ii) Full cost of accommodation for the duration of the duty (to the extent that it is not met directly by the Council), such costs to be supported by appropriate receipts.
 - (iii) The reasonable cost of all meals purchased (not including alcoholic beverages) such costs to be supported by appropriate receipts.
 - (iv) The commission charged on the necessary exchange of sterling into the appropriate foreign currency and the commission charged on the necessary exchange of the appropriate foreign currency back into sterling, such costs to be supported by appropriate receipts.
 - (v) The monetary loss as a consequence of differing exchange rates as a consequence of the exchange of the appropriate foreign currency into sterling, as identified on the exchange receipt and calculated by the Director of Resources.
 - (vi) The sum of £10 per day or part thereof to meet incidental, unidentified expenses.

The sterling equivalent of costs arising under (i), (ii) and (iii) above, when not in sterling, will be calculated using the exchange rate identified on the "out of sterling" currency exchange document.

Annex 4

National Insurance Contributions

1. If a Councillor is paid Councillors' Allowance equalling or exceeding the lower earnings limit of £520 per month (2020/21 rate), as from 6th April, 1997, there is a liability for Class 1 (earnings related) contributions.
2. The contributions are payable whether or not the Councillor has other employment or self-employment. There is an annual maximum for contribution liability for people with more than one job and in some instances a Councillor in this position may be entitled to a refund of contributions; alternatively, a Councillor may be able to apply to defer payment of contributions in his/her capacity as a Councillor.
3. Certain Councillors may be exempt from National Insurance either by virtue of age or already on the maximum rate elsewhere. If this is the case, the Councillor will need to provide the Head of Finance with an exemption certificate. Further, advice can be sought from the Head of Finance.

Annex 5

Social Security Contributions and Benefits

1. Payment of allowances will count as earnings for social security purposes. Councillors can be affected, therefore, both as contributors to the social security scheme and as beneficiaries. The above allowances will be chargeable to Schedule E for income tax and accordingly will give rise to liability for national insurance contributions unless the payments fall below the lower earnings limit.
2. These contributions can, of course, give rise to pension entitlement. As regards social security benefits, a number are subject to earnings rules, and can therefore be affected by the receipt of allowances. A Councillor who is receiving a particular benefit and is in doubt about how it may be affected is recommended to make enquiries at the local offices of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Annex 6

Statutory Sick Pay

1. Councillors who are in receipt of Councillors' Allowances are considered to be 'employed' by their authority and as such, may in certain circumstances be eligible to receive Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).
2. Where a Councillor wishes to make a claim for payment of SSP it is essential that there is a notification on the first day of absence due to sickness to the Human Resources Department. Further advice and documentation will then be issued.