



**Please ask for:** Wendy Rowe  
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29 December 2025

Dear Councillor,

**Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**  
**6:00pm, Wednesday 7 January 2026**  
**Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock**

You are invited to attend this meeting for consideration of the matters itemised in the following Agenda.

Yours sincerely,

**T. Clegg**  
**Chief Executive**

**To: Councillors:**

Todd, D. (Chair)	
Mawle, D. (Vice-Chair)	
Bullock, L.	Hill, J.O.
Craddock, R.	Johnson, T.
Fisher, P.	Lyons, O.
Haden, P.	Thompson, S.
Hill, J.	

**Invitees:****Councillors:**

Thornley, S.	Leader of the Council
Samuels, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Parks, Culture and Heritage Portfolio Leader
Williams, D.	Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.	Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Thornley, S.J.	Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader
Freeman, M.	Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader
Prestwood, J.	Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader
Lyons, O.	Proposer of first call-in request
Haden, P.	Supporter of first call-in request and member of the Scrutiny Committee
Johnson, J.	Supporter of first call-in request
Sutherland, M.	Supporter of first call-in request
Thompson, S.	Supporter of first call-in request and member of the Scrutiny Committee
Muckley, A.	Proposer of second call-in request
Bishop, L.	Supporter of second call-in request
Elson, J.	Supporter of second call-in request
Hill, J.O.	Supporter of second call-in request and member of the Scrutiny Committee
Mawle, D.	Supporter of second call-in request and member of the Scrutiny Committee

**Officers:**

Clegg, T.	Chief Executive
Stott, G.	Deputy Chief Executive-Place
Forrester, C.	Deputy Chief Executive-Resources
Piper, D.	Head of Economic Development and Planning
Curran, I.	Head of Law and Governance
Nevin, A.	Head of Wellbeing

**External:**

Cannock Chase Theatre Trust (including the Chair of the Trust)  
Cannock Arts Council  
Chase Arts for Public Spaces  
Cannock Chase MP  
Theatres Trust  
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

## **Agenda**

### **Part 1**

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members**
  - (i) To declare any personal, pecuniary, or disclosable pecuniary interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct and any possible contraventions under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
  - (ii) To receive any Party Whip declarations.
- 3. Call-in: Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme Update and Next Steps**

Report of the Head of Economic Development and Planning (Item 3.1 - 3.29).  
Appendix 4a (Item 3.28) is confidential due to the inclusion of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person.

## Call-in: Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme Update and Next Steps

**Committee:** Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 7 January 2026

**Report of:** Head of Economic Development and Planning

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and High Streets

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### 1 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide information to the Committee regarding the call-in requests received in relation to the Cabinet decisions of 4 December 2025, in respect of the Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme Update and Next Steps report.

### 2 Recommendations

2.1 That Members consider the proposals put forward by Councillor O. Lyons and Councillor Muckley as set out in report appendices 3 and 4, respectively.

### 3 Call-in Details

3.1 Cabinet, at its meeting held on 4 December 2025, considered a report entitled 'Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme and Next Steps'. The original Cabinet report is attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 Cabinet resolved that:

- (A) The progress made on delivery of the programme to date be noted.
- (B) The updated programme scope for the Cannock town centre regeneration, as set out in report appendix 1, be agreed.
- (C) The updated scope of the programme and the consequential reallocation of funding captured within decision (D), below, be noted.
- (D) Permission to spend £6.615 million be approved; this being the balance of the approved programme (comprising existing grant funding and Town Centre Investment Fund allocations).
- (E) Council, at its meeting to be held on 21 January 2026, be recommended to update the capital programme allocation in respect of those works identified in report appendix 1.
- (F) Subject to a detailed business case and further report, in-principle agreement be given for Cannock Chase District Council to relocate from the Civic Centre to facilitate the further regeneration of Cannock town centre as set out in report paragraph 5.18.

- (G) Agreement be given to the inclusion of the leasehold property (as set out in the report's confidential appendix 2 and paragraph 5.17) within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in report paragraph 5.23.
- (H) Agreement be given to the inclusion of the former Prince of Wales Theatre within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in report paragraph 5.25.
- (I) Agreement be given to the creation of a revenue budget to support delivery of the Civic Centre relocation project as set out in report paragraph 5.28.
- (J) The proposal to apply for additional capital and revenue funding as it became available, to support delivery of the Cannock town centre regeneration programme as detailed in report appendix 1 be supported. This included, but was not limited to, funding from Homes England and One Public Estate.
- (K) Authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive-Place, Deputy Chief Executive-Resources, Head of Law & Governance, Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader and the Levelling Up Fund Programme Board to take all steps to implement the overall programme within the agreed scope (as detailed in report appendix 1) and budget.

3.3 The relevant extract from the 4 December 2025 Cabinet minutes is attached at Appendix 2.

**Call-in Request 1**

3.4 Decisions (B), (H), (F) and (I) are the subject of the first call-in request received.

3.5 The request for this call-in was submitted by Councillor O. Lyons, and supported by Councillors Haden, J. Johnson, Sutherland, and Thompson.

3.6 The call-in request, detailing the specific reasons for the call-in and the proposed motion for consideration is set out in report appendix 3.

**Call-in Request 2**

3.7 Decisions (A) to (K) are the subject of the second call-in request received.

3.8 The request for this call-in was submitted by Councillor Muckley, and supported by Councillors Bishop, Elson, J.O. Hill, and Mawle.

3.9 The call-in request, detailing the specific reasons for the call-in and the proposed motion for consideration is set out in report appendix 4.

3.10 The procedure for debating a call-in request is set out in report appendix 5.

## **4 Implications**

### **4.1 Financial**

The report to Cabinet on 4 December 2025 referred to the financial implications arising from the Cabinet's resolutions. Any changes to those resolutions resulting

from the outcome of this call-in process will form part of further reports to Cabinet, if applicable.

**4.2 Legal**

The powers of the Scrutiny Committees are limited by the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) and the Council's Constitution. The Committee cannot substitute its own decision for that of the Cabinet as it has no power to make decisions on Executive functions.

If the Committee disagrees with the decision of the Cabinet it can refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration, making sure recommendations as it wishes. The Cabinet must, if the Committee refers the matter back, reconsider the decision, having regard to the Committee's recommendation, but it is not bound by the recommendation proposed.

**4.3 Human Resources**

None.

**4.4 Risk Management**

None.

**4.5 Equalities and Diversity**

None.

**4.6 Health**

None.

**6.7 Climate Change**

None.

**5 Appendices**

Appendix 1: Cabinet report - 4 December 2025 - Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme Update and Next Steps.

Appendix 2: Extract of 4 December 2025 Cabinet Minutes.

Appendix 3: Call-in Request Form 1.

Appendix 4 Call-in Request Form 2.

Appendix 4a: Call-in Request Form 2 (confidential information).

Appendix 5: Procedure for consideration a call-in request.

## Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme Update and Next Steps

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date of Meeting:** 4 December 2025

**Report of:** Head of Economic Development and Planning

**Portfolio:** Regeneration and High Streets

### 1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress made to date with delivery of the Cannock Town Centre Regeneration programme and to request the necessary permissions and delegations to support the delivery of the updated programme being brought forward at pace.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.2 That Cabinet note the progress made on delivery of the programme to date.
- 2.3 That Cabinet agree to the updated programme scope for the Cannock town centre regeneration as set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 That Cabinet note the updated scope of programme and the consequential reallocation of funding captured within 2.4.
- 2.5 That Cabinet approve permission to spend of £6.615 million, this being the balance of the approved programme (comprising existing grant funding and Town Centre Investment Fund allocations) and recommend to Council that the capital programme allocation be updated in respect of those works identified in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6 That Cabinet agree in principle, subject to a detailed business case and further report, that Cannock Chase District Council relocates from the Civic Centre to facilitate the further regeneration of Cannock town centre as set out in 5.18.
- 2.7 That Cabinet agree to the inclusion of the leasehold property as set out in the **Confidential Appendix 2** and 5.17 within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in 5.23.
- 2.8 That Cabinet agree to the inclusion of the former Prince of Wales theatre within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in 5.25.
- 2.9 That Cabinet agree to the creation of a revenue budget to support the delivery of the Civic Centre relocation project as set out in 5.28.
- 2.10 That Cabinet support the proposal to apply for additional capital and revenue funding as it becomes available to support delivery of the Cannock town centre

regeneration programme as detailed in **Appendix 1**. This includes, but is not limited to, funding from Homes England and One Public Estate.

2.11 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Head of Economic Development and Planning in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive - Place, Deputy Chief Executive - Resources, Head of Law & Governance, Portfolio Leader for Regeneration and High Streets and the Levelling Up Fund Programme Board to take all steps to implement the overall programme within the agreed scope (as detailed in **Appendix 1**) and budget.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

2.12 Following the notification<sup>1</sup> of funding simplification on 2 September 2025 amendments to LUF (now known as Local Regeneration Fund) programmes no longer require sign off from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) however this does not remove the requirement for the Council to approve specific spending proposals.

2.13 Significant interest has been generated by developers and end users for Council owned sites within the town centre and the regeneration site boundary requires formal confirmation to proceed.

## **3 Key Issues**

3.11 In March 2024 Cabinet approved the revised scope for the Cannock town centre regeneration programme which introduced a phased approach to delivery. This phased approach was recommended by officers to ensure that risks relating to the spend of grant monies were minimised as far as possible as failure to meet MHCLG deadlines could result in the loss of funding. As such Phase 1 was designed to be delivered independently of Phase 2 so that should delays occur in Phase 2 those delays couldn't compromise the demolition of the former multi storey car park and the delivery of the Northern Gateway.

3.12 Following Cabinet's approval to proceed with the land assembly that underpins Phase 2 in June 2024, Members were asked to note that officers were looking at options to fully utilise the grant funding subject to a further report to Cabinet. Following a period of public consultation, the permanent closure of the Prince of Wales Theatre was confirmed within the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2024-2028 report to full Council on 12 February 2025. Whilst works connected to the Prince of Wales Theatre formed part of the original regeneration programme, in light of the Cabinet's decision of 4 September 2025 in respect of not agreeing a Community Asset Transfer of the theatre, officers have considered alternative projects against which the remaining funding can be allocated within the context of the emerging Development Framework.

3.13 Following the publication of guidance relating to funding simplification on 2 September 2025 MHCLG have confirmed that the Council must have all Levelling

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<sup>1</sup> As notified by MHCLG and published on the gov.uk website 2 September 2025 [Local Regeneration Fund: technical guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Up Fund (now known as Local Regeneration Fund; LRF) monies spent by 31 March 2028.

3.14 This report therefore updates on the progress made to date and the proposed projects that will complete the town centre regeneration programme.

## 4 Relationship to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The Cannock Town Centre Transformation Programme supports delivery of the following priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-26:

- i) Economic Prosperity
- ii) Health and Wellbeing
- iii) Responsible Council

By leading on site assembly and clearance works the regeneration programme is addressing longstanding issues around deliverability that could continue to deter investment in Cannock town centre. A redevelopment opportunity that offers the potential for a variety of uses can support both the local economy and the delivery of housing.

4.2 The Programme is also consistent with the development strategy as set out in the emerging Cannock Chase District Local Plan 2018-2040.

## 5 Report Detail

5.1 In October 2021 the Council secured £20m from the first round of the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) to support an ambitious and transformational town centre regeneration scheme with a further £6.8m investment from the Council's Capital Programme. The original deadline by which all grant monies had to be spent was 31 March 2025.

5.2 To progress work to secure technical support and land assembly Cabinet resolutions secured permission to spend up to £1.9 million in June 2022 in respect of multi-disciplinary consultants and £330,500 in respect of the acquisition of Cannock Shopping Centre units 1-3 in June 2023.

5.3 The bid winning scheme was complex with dependencies across different elements, parts of which relied on land assembly to deliver the regeneration works. Following a lengthy Compulsory Purchase Order process that sought to secure control of key pieces of land, and in light of concerns around land availability, cost control and deliverability, officers worked closely with MHCLG to agree a deliverable amended scheme. In March 2024 a new phased approach to delivery, supported by MHCLG, was agreed by Cabinet and updated further in June 2024 when details of Phase 2 were confirmed.

### Phase 1 Progress Update

5.4 At their meeting in March 2024 Cabinet agreed to proceed with the revised scope for Phase 1 as follows:

- i) Demolition of the former Multi-Storey Car Park and Indoor Market Hall site; creating a development platform for a new cultural hub.

- ii) Creation of the Northern Gateway, removing the existing subway and connecting the town centre to the bus station and Beecroft Road car park via new high quality public realm and creation of a new café unit.
- iii) Refurbishment of Beecroft Road car park, including improved accessibility and installation of electric vehicle charging points, bike hub and associated landscaping works.

5.5 A budget of £9,000,000 was agreed based on estimates at the time. In terms of the individual workstreams, the demolition of the former retail units is complete, and the demolition of the multi-storey car park is on track for completion by the end of 2025.

5.6 As the programme has progressed and details refined the current estimated costs as of November 2025 for Phase 1 (including contingency) are £7.14m, however this does not include any budget for the Northern Gateway works relating to the highway and café scheme.

5.7 Following the completion of detailed technical design work the cost of the highways improvements element of the Northern Gateway was reaching a level considered to be disproportionate with the scale of the works offering poor value for money. Furthermore, the projected cost of the Northern Gateway café scheme also increased significantly. The value for money assessment is set out in the **Confidential Appendix 2**. It is recommended that Cabinet remove the highway and café works from the scope and progress an appropriately scaled public realm improvement scheme and Beecroft Road refurbishment that is within the previously agreed budget and delegations for Phase 1 works as approved in March 2024.

5.8 Members are asked to note that whilst an appropriate sum has been budgeted for the refurbishment of Beecroft Road car park, included within the £7.14m referenced above, Cabinet should also note that officers are currently exploring whether there may be appetite from the private sector to deliver a decked car park on the same site thereby increasing the number of spaces. That would be subject to a further Cabinet report to consider the impacts to the Council's revenue budget.

## Phase 2 Progress Update

5.9 Phase 2 of the programme focussed on creating a redevelopment opportunity that will attract significant investment into Cannock town centre achieved via strategic land assembly and site preparation works. At their meeting in June 2024 Cabinet approved the following Phase 2 scope of works:

- i. Acquisition and demolition of the Forum Shopping Centre
- ii. Acquisition and partial demolition of retail units along Church Street, Market Street and Market Hall Street
- iii. Public realm works

5.10 A Phase 2 budget of £8,750,000 was agreed based on estimates at the time. As the programme has progressed and details refined the current estimated costs as of November 2025 for Phase 2 (including contingency) are £5.05m.

- 5.11 In terms of the individual workstreams, leasehold acquisitions of the Forum shopping centre, Market Hall Street and Church Street retail units and freehold acquisition of the former Barclays Bank were all completed in February 2025. Vacant possession of the Forum was secured in March 2025, and one occupier remains in the properties along Church Street which are earmarked for demolition. A planning application for demolition of the Forum was submitted in June 2025 with permission subsequently issued in October 2025. Demolition is estimated for completion in June 2026. A planning application for demolition of the former retail units along Church Street will be submitted in early 2026.
- 5.12 Whilst the Forum Shopping Centre was earmarked for demolition within the business case for the acquisition, Members were advised that the retail units along Market Hall Street were mostly occupied and the Council would need to consider whether to retain these units in the long term or to consider onward disposal to a third party, or further demolition. An options appraisal will be presented to Cabinet in a separate report at a later date.

### **Programme Delivery Scope**

- 5.13 As the enabling works as set out within Phases 1 and 2 move into their final stages, the programme focusses on the individual redevelopment projects. Prior to the introduction of the phased enabling works approach in March 2024, the regeneration scheme originally included works relating to the Prince of Wales Theatre. As reported to Cabinet in June 2024 officers were looking at options to fully utilise the £20m of LUF funding subject to a further report to Cabinet. One of those options was works in respect of the Prince of Wales Theatre building.
- 5.14 In November 2024 Cabinet considered the findings of a review into leisure, culture and heritage provision and proposals to reduce Council spend on the service. Following a period of public consultation, the permanent closure of the Prince of Wales Theatre was confirmed within the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2024-2028 report to full Council on 12 February 2025. Further to this, Cabinet resolved on 4 September 2025 to not proceed with a Community Asset Transfer in respect of the theatre which concludes any plans for capital investment via LRF monies.
- 5.15 This means that the Council now hold an asset that requires significant investment to repurpose it and in the absence of a business case to support the continuation of theatre provision of a similar scale in that location without the continued need for subsidy the site needs to be decommissioned to avoid further additional ongoing costs. As the Council currently has access to grant funding to address this, but only within a limited timeframe, it is recommended that Cabinet make the decision to include the theatre building within the red line of the regeneration programme and that work progresses, subject to planning consent. The Council is mindful of the future of cultural provision in Cannock town centre and will embed the consideration of performing arts and cultural space within the Development Framework as set out in 5.30.
- 5.16 As a result of this, and in the context of the current budgets for Phases 1 and 2, officers have explored alternative options to further support the regeneration of Cannock town centre. Due to the constraints of repurposing the building, the site is being reviewed as part of the emerging Development Framework which will

recommend redevelopment options across the town centre sites. The Framework will be reported to Cabinet in the new year.

- 5.17 Members will recall that the original vision for the town centre involved a broader scheme of demolition works. At the time the occupiers of one of the key sites were not in a position to vacate and an alternative scheme was developed (now known as Phase 1) as approved by Cabinet in March 2024. When that decision was made the grant conditions required all LUF monies to be spent by 31 March 2025, however that position was subsequently revised by MHCLG in January 2025 (to 31 March 2026), in April 2025 (to 31 March 27) and in September 2025 (to 31 March 2028). In connection with the Development Framework exercise, officers have revisited discussions with the leaseholder and on the basis that an appropriate alternative town centre location becomes available, the leaseholder is prepared to move thereby enabling demolition of the existing store.
- 5.18 The land upon which the Civic Centre is sited meets the leaseholder's requirements but for that land to become available to facilitate the relocation alternative office provision is required for the Council and its partners. The potential for a broader scheme has remained part of the strategic vision for Cannock town centre to maximise the regeneration opportunity and remove a dated building from such a prominent location. The issue has been around finding a suitable, nearby alternative and being able to do so within the tight deadlines imposed by the funding conditions. The extended deadline of March 2028 could enable the Council to relocate its own functions (or those of a new unitary Council currently under consideration by Government as part of Local Government Reorganisation) to new, appropriately sized, office space in the area formerly occupied by the multi-storey car park, whilst also supporting the regeneration programme by generating additional footfall in the retail area.
- 5.19 To enable officers to progress this proposal with the leaseholder the Council need to demonstrate a commitment to their own relocation. This is so that the leaseholder can proceed with the necessary work to support the creation of a new store which will incur cost to their organisation. If Members are minded to support the inclusion of a Council relocation project to enable a retail relocation project within the regeneration programme, three distinct but related decisions are required.
- 5.20 Firstly, an in-principle decision is required on the relocation of Council staff and services from the Civic Centre to the town centre to enable detailed feasibility and design work to commence. The existing Civic Centre is larger than required to deliver Council services and due to the age of the building is expensive to run. This decision will be subject to a detailed business case, the necessary consultations and the due diligence required to undertake the relocation which will be presented in a future report to Cabinet. The business case will review current and requirements for the Council and associated costs and benefits of any options put forward.
- 5.21 The intention is that the Council would relocate to new office space within the town centre once built, therefore removing the need for a temporary relocation and avoiding the associated disruption this could cause. This means that the timescale for the relocation of the leaseholder could be around 2 years, it being the final move in a sequence that sees the new offices built, Council services relocating, demolition of the existing Civic Centre and new retail store built and ready for

occupation. The timescales associated with this sequencing will form part of the detailed business case to be reported to Cabinet at a future date.

- 5.22 Members should note that the project referenced in 5.17 only relates to the front of the existing Civic Centre site but that the redevelopment of the wider site could also result in new build affordable social housing. Positive conversations have already taken place with Homes England, and a detailed business case will be presented to Members at a future Cabinet meeting.
- 5.23 Secondly, on the basis of an in-principle decision to relocate Council services, Members are asked to agree to progress discussions concerning relocation of the leaseholder, with the subsequent demolition of the existing retail unit and the creation of a town centre office development being subject to planning consent and the results of the feasibility study. A further report will follow specifically relating to the commercial business case.
- 5.24 As referenced in 5.19, as a result of formally progressing this project the leaseholder will incur costs related to the creation and submission of a planning application for their new store. As such Members are asked to agree a financial undertaking not exceeding £25,000 which would become payable should the outcome of the detailed business case for the Council's relocation make the leaseholder's move undeliverable. The full revenue budget requirement is set out in 5.28.
- 5.25 Finally, on the basis of 5.14 above, Members are asked to agree inclusion of the demolition of the former theatre building within the regeneration programme, subject to planning consent.

### **Regeneration Programme Permission to Spend**

- 5.26 Cabinet are asked to agree permission to spend for the capital works to deliver the acquisitions, demolitions, and improvement works as set out in the body of this report and the enable the delivery of the programme scope as set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.27 Members are also asked to note that the programme may be subject to change as a result of the Fair Funding Review.

### **Revenue Budget Creation**

- 5.28 As the works relating to the creation of a new town centre office space that could accommodate Council services alongside consideration of an integrated cultural space are currently entering the feasibility stage the associated work required to build the business case will be revenue costs rather than capital. An initial cost estimate is in the region of £125,000. This will support completion of the full business case, creating the evidence base of surveys and reports underpinning that, project management and the costs undertaking relating to the leaseholder as set out in 5.24 above. Members are therefore asked to support the creation of a revenue budget of £150,000 including the £25,000 set out in paragraph 5.24. A further revenue requirement may be identified as a result of the business case recommendations for the relocation of staff, but this will be discussed within the associated Cabinet report.

## Cannock Town Centre Development Framework and Delivery Strategy

- 5.29 In anticipation of attendance at the UKREiiF<sup>2</sup> event in May 2025 officers commissioned a high-level piece of work to demonstrate the scale of the redevelopment opportunity being created in Cannock town centre. As a result, a number of meetings took place with investors, developers and end users and those conversations have helped to inform the scope of the opportunity.
- 5.30 By acquiring and clearing land in the town centre the Council has created a significant footprint for development but to convert that aspiration into a deliverable programme the feedback from the UKREiiF meetings (including subsequent discussions in the town centre itself) now needs to guide investment that is right for Cannock. As such a Development Framework has been commissioned and will be reported to Cabinet in the new year. Consideration is being given to a variety of complimentary uses across the town centre that both support each other and the vitality of the town centre whilst also responding to the Council's wider placemaking aspirations and developing Cannock's cultural offer.
- 5.31 In advance of the completed Framework and as a result of the strong interest the private sector have shown in Cannock town centre, officers are in discussions with a number of developers and end users. Residential, commercial and multi-purpose building requirements have all generated positive feedback. Further detail on this will accompany the next Cabinet report recommendations associated with the completed Framework and delivery strategy.

## 6 Implications

### 4.7 Financial

As set out in the report permission to spend of £6.615 million is requested for the balance of the capital programme budget for LUF/LRG.

The latest budget estimates for phases 1 and 2 are detailed within the report, there are also programme management costs which form part of the overall budget spend. The budget allocated to all phases is £26.265 million. Scheme delivery will operate within this overall envelope and budget reallocated across the phases where necessary.

There are two requests within the report for revenue funding, the first is in relation to support for the leaseholder in relation to creation and submission of a planning application for their new store which would become repayable if the outcome of the detailed business case for the Council's relocation make the leaseholder's move undeliverable at a value of £25,000. The second relates to the feasibility work as set out in paragraph 5.28 to determine if there is a viable business case for the Council relocation, this is a cost of £125,000. Both of these elements will be funded from reserves at a level of £150,000 in total.

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<sup>2</sup> UKREiiF is the UK Real Estate, Investment and Infrastructure Forum which is an annual event held in Leeds. Further information can be found here: [UKREiiF 2025 | Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum](https://www.ukreif.co.uk/)

The future workstream elements set out in appendix 1 for the civic hub and the leasehold retail units are dependent upon the future report to come after the business case.

In relation to the highway and café works as a result of not moving forward with those elements there will be abortive costs which are currently being reviewed.

#### **4.8 Legal**

The Cannock Town Centre Regeneration programme is already identified. Within the Council's capital programme but Cabinet approval is required for permission to spend.

Whilst the LUF/LRG award now benefits from the funding simplification arrangements as set out in 3.3, officers do still need to ensure that all associated grant conditions are monitored and met.

All elements of procurement must follow the relevant procurement regulations when awarding contracts.

#### **4.9 Human Resources**

If the proposal to relocate Cannock Chase District Council staff proceeds as a result of the full business case being reported to a future Cabinet meeting this will have an impact on all employees whose current place of work is designated as the Civic Centre. Employees will be kept informed and advised when a new location is confirmed. Any individual concerns arising from this would be considered in line with relevant Council policy.

#### **4.10 Risk Management**

The Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme is already included in the Council's Strategic Risk Register. The overarching programme risk focuses on the ability to deliver the regeneration projects with controls to mitigate the risk including all key decisions being taken by Cabinet and dedicated programme management support having been procured. That enables the Council to operate a robust governance structure that encompasses budget and risk management and change control processes.

The recommendations of this report represent the actions required to increase the viability and deliverability of the regeneration opportunity and seek to mitigate the risks associated with securing development partners. This can be achieved by confirming the extent of the opportunity site, demonstrating commitment to the leaseholder and allocating funding to the remainder of the programme scope. Conversely, if the actions aren't progressed the risk of securing a developer partner is potentially increased.

As with any property related project there is an acknowledgement that, for technical or commercial reasons, following initial feasibility studies a project may not be deliverable in its intended form. In the case of the leaseholder/ Civic Centre relocation project this risk could relate either to the Council's ability to move or equally to the leaseholder. As such, this report asks for in principle decisions to enable the initial feasibility work with full approval subject to the detailed business cases. As noted in 5.28 above, a revenue budget is required to complete the

feasibility stage, and those costs fall due to the Council whether the project proceeds or not.

Due to the nature of regeneration projects and the complexity of progressing projects that are dependent on one another ensuring there is capacity to deliver is key. The cost of this, couple with the fluctuating nature of the cost of works is recognised in the contingencies budgets applied to each area of the programme.

#### **4.11 Equalities and Diversity**

An Equality and Impact Assessment is in place for the project - there are no direct implications for this report. This will be refreshed as the programme is confirmed following the feasibility work referenced throughout this report.

#### **6.6 Health**

It is recognised that a redevelopment of this scale will have significant impacts on many of the wider determinants of health and the Programme Delivery Team will work with colleagues and partners to ensure opportunities to reduce health inequalities are maximised.

#### **6.7 Climate Change**

Where demolition works form part of a regeneration project climate change implications and treatment of waste materials are considered as part of the contractor procurement exercise.

### **7 Appendices**

Appendix 1: Cannock Chase Town Centre Regeneration Programme Scope

Confidential Appendix: Leasehold plan; Northern Gateway Highway Works Costs

### **8 Previous Consideration**

Cabinet: 2 February 2022, 16 June 2022, 15 June 2023, 28 March 2024, 12 June 2024

### **9 Background Papers**

[Local Regeneration Fund - GOV.UK](#)

File available in Economic Development and Planning

**Contact Officer:** Michelle Smith

**Report Track:** Cabinet: 04/12/25

Council: 21/01/26

**Key Decision:** Yes

## Appendix 1

## Cannock Chase Town Centre Regeneration Programme Scope

Project	Workstream	Current Status
<b>Phase 1</b>		
Demolition	Multistorey Car Park	On track for completion 2025.
Northern Gateway	Units 1-3, Cannock Shopping Centre	Leasehold acquired, vacant possession secured, demolition complete, remedial works underway.
Northern Gateway	Beecroft Road Car Park Resurfacing	Sequencing delayed due to highways works complexity; can be reprogrammed following Members approval of the revised scope.
Northern Gateway	Steps, ramp and public realm at the entrance to the town centre	Subject to Member approval, revised scheme without highway works to be designed.
<b>Phase 2</b>		
Land Assembly	Forum Shopping Centre	Acquired February 2025, vacant possession from March 2025.
Land Assembly	Retail units along Market Hall Street, Market Place and Church Street	Acquired February 2025.
Demolition	Forum Shopping Centre	Planning consent issued October 2025 for demolition of the shopping centre; preparatory works underway.
Demolition	Church Street and Market Place Retail Units	Planning application being prepared, one tenant in situ but relocation discussions ongoing.
<b>Future Workstreams</b>		
Demolition	Former theatre	Subject to Member approval a planning application for demolition will be prepared.
Land Assembly	Leasehold Retail Units, Cannock Shopping Centre	Subject to Member approval, heads of terms and costs undertakings to be agreed to facilitate a relocation to the site of the existing Civic Centre.
Demolition	Leasehold Retail Units	Subject to Member approval, a planning application for demolition consent will be progressed to enable demolition after the leaseholder relocates which in turn is subject to new Civic building delivery.
Civic Hub	Business case to support the delivery of new town centre offices, including consideration of integrated cultural space	Subject to Member approval, full business case to be reported to Cabinet.
Redevelopment Proposals	Development Framework	Strategic vision for the redevelopment of each plot within the town; this document is being drafted and nearing completion. Document to be reported to Cabinet early 2026.
Programme Management	Across all Cannock town centre workstreams	Programme management resource procured.

**Cannock Chase Council****Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Cabinet****Held on Thursday 4 December 2025 at 6:00 p.m.****In the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock****Part 1****Present:****Councillors:**

Thornley, S. Leader of the Council  
Samuels, G. Deputy Leader of the Council and  
Parks, Culture and Heritage Portfolio Leader  
Williams, D. Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader  
Preece, J. Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader  
Thornley, S.J. Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader  
Freeman, M. Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader  
Prestwood, J. Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader

**64. Apologies**

None received.

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

None received.

**68. Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme Update and Next Steps**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Economic Development and Planning (Item 12.1 - 12.14).

**Resolved:**

That:

- (A) The progress made on delivery of the programme to date be noted.
- (B) The updated programme scope for the Cannock town centre regeneration, as set out in report appendix 1, be agreed.
- (C) The updated scope of the programme and the consequential reallocation of funding captured within decision (D), below, be noted.

- (D) Permission to spend £6.615 million be approved; this being the balance of the approved programme (comprising existing grant funding and Town Centre Investment Fund allocations).
- (E) Council, at its meeting to be held on 21 January 2026, be recommended to update the capital programme allocation in respect of those works identified in report appendix 1.
- (F) Subject to a detailed business case and further report, in-principle agreement be given for Cannock Chase District Council to relocate from the Civic Centre to facilitate the further regeneration of Cannock town centre as set out in report paragraph 5.18.
- (G) Agreement be given to the inclusion of the leasehold property (as set out in the report's confidential appendix 2 and paragraph 5.17) within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in report paragraph 5.23.
- (H) Agreement be given to the inclusion of the former Prince of Wales Theatre within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in report paragraph 5.25.
- (I) Agreement be given to the creation of a revenue budget to support delivery of the Civic Centre relocation project as set out in report paragraph 5.28.
- (J) The proposal to apply for additional capital and revenue funding as it became available, to support delivery of the Cannock town centre regeneration programme as detailed in report appendix 1 be supported. This included, but was not limited to, funding from Homes England and One Public Estate.
- (K) Authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive-Place, Deputy Chief Executive-Resources, Head of Law & Governance, Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader and the Levelling Up Fund Programme Board to take all steps to implement the overall programme within the agreed scope (as detailed in report appendix 1) and budget.

#### **Reasons for Decisions:**

Following the notification of funding simplification on 2 September 2025, amendments to the Levelling Up Fund (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) programmes no longer required sign-off from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. However, this did not remove the requirement for the Council to approve specific spending proposals.

Significant interest had been generated by developers and end users for Council owned sites within the town centre and the regeneration site boundary required formal confirmation to proceed.

*(Councillor Preece requested that his name be recorded as having abstained on the vote on this report.)*



**Cannock Chase Council**  
**Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**  
**Request for Call-in of a Decision of the Cabinet (Executive)**

Minute Reference / Number: **Item 68**

Date of Cabinet Meeting: **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

Subject: **Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme**

**Recommendation** (describe the recommendation that you wish to see reviewed):

**POINT 1**

**Cabinet Report, 2.2** - That Cabinet agree to the updated programme scope for the Cannock town centre regeneration as set out in Appendix 1 (*Specifically, Future Workstreams-Demolition-Former Theatre*).

**Cabinet Report, 2.7** - That Cabinet agree to the inclusion of the former Prince of Wales theatre within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in 5.25.

**POINT 2**

**Cabinet Report, 2.5** - That Cabinet agree in principle, subject to a detailed business case and further report, that Cannock Chase District Council relocates from the Civic Centre to facilitate the further regeneration of Cannock town centre as set out in 5.18.

**Cabinet Report, 2.8** - That Cabinet agree to the creation of a revenue budget to support the delivery of the Civic Centre relocation project as set out in 5.28.

**Reason for Call-In:**

**Point 1**

The Prince of Wales Theatre was central to the original Levelling Up bid submitted on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021, with proposed enhancements to the venue forming a core element of the submission. As stated in the publicly available application form (released in line with funder requirements and Freedom of Information regulations): "*Significant investment will be made in cultural development, with the enhancement and diversification of the Prince of Wales Theatre. This will strengthen the theatre facility as a local community asset and cultural destination.*" The intention was to improve the Theatre and its surrounding area to achieve, as cited in the bid, "*increased visitor numbers and, crucially, an increased spend per visitor at the Prince of Wales.*"

This approach was informed by post-Covid analysis, including *The Retail and Town Centre Uses Study* (January 2021) commissioned by Cannock Chase District Council and undertaken by Tetra Tech (specialists in Theatre design). This study incorporated telephone

surveys with local households to understand, amongst other things, retail, and leisure habit. The findings supported a detailed SWOT analysis of local retail and leisure provision and highlighted opportunities for improvement. In addition, feedback received during the Council's *Local Plan Preferred Options* consultation demonstrated strong public support for arts and cultural facilities within Cannock Town Centre.

The original bid, centred on an enhanced Prince of Wales Theatre at its existing location, received widespread backing. Numerous letters of support from prominent stakeholders accompanied the application. The proposal also referenced Galeri Caernarfon as a successful model of an integrated cultural facility combining a cinema, music venues, and theatre—evidence of how pivotal the existing Theatre was to the 2021 vision.

Following confirmation of the bid's success, preparatory work commenced. The Cabinet subsequently considered a series of related reports, including the procurement of technical expertise (June 2022), acquisition of Cannock Shopping Centre (June 2023), and the progression of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). None of these actions represented a significant departure from the original bid, except the inclusion of a cinema which was reconsidered given the success of the Electric Palace Picture House within Cannock Town Centre.

On 28 March 2024, the new administration reassessed the Levelling Up Programme in light of circumstances at that time, including challenges that had arisen from the CPO process. A decision was made to revise the scope of Phase 1 of the scheme. The revised plan included demolition of the multi-storey car park and market hall, creation of the Northern Gateway through the removal of the subway, development of a café hub, and refurbishment of the Beecroft Road Car Park. Details of Phase 2 were deferred for reconsideration. This phased approach constituted the first major deviation from the original proposals.

In February 2025, the Cabinet confirmed the closure of the Prince of Wales Theatre through approval of budget proposals presented by the controlling Labour administration. The closure was not considered as a standalone decision but formed part of wider budget measures. A related public consultation ran for a short period between late November 2024 and early January 2025. This consultation did not focus solely on the Theatre but was framed on the Council's website as covering "changes to some of our cultural and heritage services." Despite the limited timeframe, drop-in sessions were well attended, and more than 2,100 responses were received.

Furthermore, on 22 January 2025, Full Council received a petition opposing the closure of the Prince of Wales Theatre, signed by 20,086 individuals. This demonstrates the significant level of public concern and the strong community sentiment surrounding the proposed closure.

Following this, Cabinet agreed to explore the potential for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) for the Theatre. As referenced in the SLC report, a Community Asset Transfer Applicant Invitation was issued to two bidders on 16 April 2025. Throughout the period that followed, Cabinet Members offered several positive public assurances regarding the Theatre's future under potential community ownership. Notably, at the Cabinet meeting on 24 April 2025, the then Leader of the Council, Tony Johnson, thanked staff and stated that "*It was hopeful that the Theatre could reopen after its temporary closure period.*"

This position changed following completion of the CAT process and receipt of SLC's recommendations based on their assessment of the single CAT submission from Cannock Chase Theatre Trust (CCTT). Acting on SLC's advice, Cabinet rejected CCTT's bid at its meeting on 4 September 2025. During this meeting, Councillor John Preece, Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader, specifically requested that additional assurances be formally recorded:

## 1. Assurance regarding Planning Application CH/25/0189

We understand that, at the time the Council's Planning Committee, initially considered the application, Members specifically proposed a motion to exclude the theatre. They were of the understanding that this action would protect the Theatre going forward.

Cabinet noted Planning Application CH/25/0189, which proposed demolition of the Forum Shopping Centre, and acknowledged public concern arising from the inclusion of the Theatre building within the application boundary. Cabinet clarified that the Theatre was included solely due to the potential structural implications of demolishing adjacent buildings. Councillor Preece requested specifically that it be minuted that: *"The Theatre will not be demolished as part of Planning Application CH/25/0189."*

While this assurance confirmed that the Theatre would not be demolished under this specific application, it nevertheless suggested a broader commitment to preserving the building—or at very least did not indicate that a recommendation to seek permission for demolition would be published less than two months later.

## 2. Assurance regarding future engagement

A second assurance from Cllr Preece, in his capacity as a Cabinet Member, minuted at the same meeting stated: *"Cannock Chase Council will continue to speak and work with any interested organisations or groups with respect to the future of the Prince of Wales Theatre... Cabinet accepts that there must be a realistic timeframe for ongoing dialogue... and therefore recommends the issue is discussed at the relevant Scrutiny Committee."*

The matter was subsequently discussed at the Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee on 8 September 2025—only four days after the Cabinet meeting. Councillor Preece's statement clearly indicated that, as of 4 September 2025, Cabinet was willing to continue dialogue with interested organisations. The recording of this public meeting further demonstrates that this sentiment was shared by multiple Cabinet Members.

However, despite this assurance, Cabinet have not since appeared willing to continue such dialogue. At least two of the invitees to the call-in process are active interested parties who have sought engagement but received little to no further opportunity for meaningful two-way discussion. Moreover, a single Scrutiny meeting only four days after the Cabinet decision in respect of the CAT cannot reasonably be considered a sufficient or "realistic" timeframe for further examination of the Theatre's future. By the time the next scheduled Responsible Council Scrutiny Committee meeting took place on 10 December 2025, Cabinet had already resolved to include the Prince of Wales Theatre within the demolition boundary.

It should also be noted that the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee on 9 December 2025, Members from all political groups raised concerns. The Committee voted to recommend that Cabinet reconsider its decision.

Taken together, recent developments suggest that key decisions regarding the Theatre during 2025 were taken rapidly, with limited supporting data and without evidence of a comprehensive long-term impact assessment. Although Cabinet's decisions of 4 December 2025 do not directly relate to the Theatre's closure or the CAT process, Cabinet have nonetheless proposed to include the Theatre within the demolition boundary and authorised the preparation of a separate application for its demolition. This effectively ends all previously promised opportunities for engagement with interested parties to identify alternative solutions for the existing building. We consider this action premature and taken before all reasonable avenues have been explored.

Correspondence dated 3 December 2025 from the Theatres Trust—the government's arms-length public body for theatres—confirms that it is “actively attempting to engage with decision-making.” It is our understanding that representatives from the Theatres Trust met with Cabinet Members and Council Officers on 27 November 2025 and raised concerns, including:

- (a) the absence of a clear social or economic impact assessment informing the decision to demolish;
- (b) the lack of a full assessment of the financial and social implications of demolition; and
- (c) the absence of a diligent process to explore alternative options for continued Theatre operation.

As elected representatives, we share these concerns and do not believe sufficient information has been provided to justify progressing with the drafting of a planning application for demolition.

Referring to Section 10.2 of the Council's Constitution regarding the principles of decision-making, we believe that Cabinet's decision to include the Prince of Wales Theatre within the demolition boundary is disproportionate and does not reflect the interests of the wider community. This is particularly concerning in light of the petition submitted last year containing more than 20,000 signatures, as well as the limited evidence that Cabinet has maintained genuine two-way engagement with interested parties over the past two months, despite assurances given publicly in September.

We do not consider the brief consultation undertaken a year ago to be adequate, given the strength of public feeling and the permanence of the proposed action. At the time of that consultation, demolition of the Theatre was not presented as an option. If Cabinet proceeds along the current path, any future consultation will fall solely within the statutory planning framework and therefore be limited to material planning considerations. Furthermore, in view of the recent public statements from the national Theatres Trust, we do not believe sufficient professional expertise has been sought or considered beyond SLC's arguably inaccurate assessment of the single CAT submission, which Cannock Chase Theatre Trust have confirmed was undertaken without full consideration of their submission and without them being provided an opportunity to expand.

The apparent absence of social and economic impact assessments, combined with little detail on any engagement with interested parties outside the CAT process, leaves it unclear what alternative options Cabinet has genuinely explored. This concern is compounded by the fact that clear assurances were given in September that demolition of the Prince of Wales Theatre was not under consideration, yet less than two months later Cabinet resolved to seek permission for demolition. This sequence of events does not appear open or transparent, particularly as no further public discussion or consultation appears to have taken place during that interim period.

Finally, as outlined earlier in this document, an enhanced Prince of Wales Theatre formed a central component of the original Regeneration Proposal, with the stated aim of increasing footfall into Cannock and supporting the local economy. With this element now removed from the Scheme and with the additional removal of the highway/subway works and the hub café as outlined at 12.14 of Cabinet's report, we are unclear about the current objectives and intended outcomes of the overall regeneration programme, given the extent to which it has been significantly reduced. As part of the original bid submitted under the previous Conservative administration, the Government gateway criteria required that the project deliver a 'benefit to cost' ratio (BCR) in excess of 2. At the time of submission, the BCR within the submitted business case was 2.46. We feel that Cabinet have not in recent reports made clear the impact to this score, if any, the numerous subsequent changes have had.

## POINT 2

At its meeting on 4 December 2025, Cabinet agreed in principle, subject to the development of a business case, to relocate Cannock Chase District Council from the Civic Centre in order to vacate the existing site and enable further regeneration.

Previously, at its meeting on 2 February 2022, the former Conservative administration agreed that officers should produce a detailed business case setting out the rationale for relocating the Civic Centre and civic offices into the proposed Levelling Up Fund (LUF) scheme in Cannock Town Centre, including an assessment of potential opportunities for public sector partners to co-locate or co-invest in such a facility. The same report highlighted that building condition surveys undertaken in 2018 and 2021 identified required works to the existing Civic Centre totalling approximately £7.9 million.

As discussions progressed, and having regard to the associated financial implications, capital requirements, revenue impacts, and income projections, it became apparent that any relocation proposals would be complex. Consequently, the proposals for a new civic facility were subsequently decoupled from the wider Regeneration Scheme.

It is unclear whether any information or analysis has been considered in advance of the recent in-principle decision, or whether the previously requested business case was ever completed. Further information is therefore sought to better understand the basis on which Cabinet reached its decision.

Cabinet papers dated 16 June 2022 made clear that, prior to any further consideration of relocation, clarity would be required regarding the Council's requirements for new civic offices, including alignment with any agreed hybrid working model and new ways of working. It is our understanding that this work has not yet been concluded. Indeed, also at the Cabinet meeting on 4 December 2025, Cabinet considered a progress report on the Governance Improvement Plan as at 30 September 2025. Within that report, the Head of Transformation and Assurance noted that development of a hybrid working policy is behind schedule, with a comment stating that "work cannot commence on this until the review has been completed and agreement reached on the future direction of hybrid working."

In light of the above, and in the interests of transparency, we would welcome clarification on what information has been considered and relied upon in reaching the recent in-principle decision.

### What are you proposing?

That the decision taken by Cabinet on Thursday 4th December 2025, be referred to Full Council for reconsideration.

I therefore move that:

- (a) In accordance with Section 10.2 of the Council's Constitution and in the interests of openness and transparency, Members be provided with full details of the factors considered when previous decisions were made. This should include, but is not limited to:
  - any social and economic impact assessments undertaken.
  - a clear explanation of how the current Regeneration Scheme proposals differ from the original submission, including the implications arising from the removal of the Prince of Wales Theatre on the overall Scheme;
  - a summary of the options explored by the Cabinet in respect of the Theatre outside of the Community Asset Transfer process; and

- a clear explanation of Cabinet's rational for considering the relocation of the Civic Centre.

(b) Upon receipt of the information outlined in (a), the matter be referred to Full Council for further consideration.

**Please indicate below who should be invited to the Scrutiny Committee meeting?**

Member(s)	Officer(s)	Representative from organisations/public
All Cabinet Members (in particular Cllr Preece to discuss his previous statements that he requested in on public record).	Tim Clegg	Cannock Chase Theatre Trust
All members detailed below that have supported this motion.	Chris Forrester	The Theatres Trust (National)
Cllr Olivia Lyons	Dean Piper	The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
Cllr Justin Johnson	Gregg Stott	
Cllr Mike Sutherland	Anna Nevin	
Cllr Philippa Haden		
Cllr Samantha Thompson		

The request for call-in will only be valid if a total of 5 Members\* have supported it, and it is returned to the Chief Executive by no later than the deadline date on the published Cabinet Minutes.

*\*2 of whom must be Members of the relevant Scrutiny Committee, and none of whom may be Cabinet member.*

**Request made and supported by:**

Name	Signature	Date
Cllr. Olivia Lyons	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Cllr. Philippa Haden	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Cllr. Justin Johnson	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Cllr. Mike Sutherland	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Cllr. Samantha Thompson	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025



**Cannock Chase Council**  
**Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee**  
**Request for Call-in of a Decision of the Cabinet (Executive)**

Minute Reference / Number: **Item 68**

Date of Cabinet Meeting: **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

Subject: **Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme including inter alia, the demolition of the Prince of Wales**

**Decision to be called-in:**

“68. Cannock Town Centre Regeneration Programme Update and Next Steps Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Economic Development and Planning (Item 12.1 - 12.14).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The progress made on delivery of the programme to date be noted.
- (B) The updated programme scope for the Cannock town centre regeneration, as set out in report appendix 1, be agreed.
- (C) The updated scope of the programme and the consequential reallocation of funding captured within decision (D), below, be noted.
- (D) Permission to spend £6.615 million be approved; this being the balance of the approved programme (comprising existing grant funding and Town Centre Investment Fund allocations).
- (E) Council, at its meeting to be held on 21 January 2026, be recommended to update the capital programme allocation in respect of those works identified in report appendix 1.
- (F) Subject to a detailed business case and further report, in-principle agreement be given for Cannock Chase District Council to relocate from the Civic Centre to facilitate the further regeneration of Cannock town centre as set out in report paragraph 5.18.
- (G) Agreement be given to the inclusion of the leasehold property (as set out in the report's confidential appendix 2 and paragraph 5.17) within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in report paragraph 5.23.
- (H) Agreement be given to the inclusion of the former Prince of Wales Theatre within the red line for the regeneration programme with the intention to demolish, subject to planning consent, as set out in report paragraph 5.25.

- (I) Agreement be given to the creation of a revenue budget to support delivery of the Civic Centre relocation project as set out in report paragraph 5.28.
- (J) The proposal to apply for additional capital and revenue funding as it became available, to support delivery of the Cannock town centre regeneration programme as detailed in report appendix 1 be supported. This included, but was not limited to, funding from Homes England and One Public Estate. Cabinet 04/12/25 44
- (K) Authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Development and Planning, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive-Place, Deputy Chief Executive-Resources, Head of Law & Governance, Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader and the Levelling Up Fund Programme Board to take all steps to implement the overall programme within the agreed scope (as detailed in report appendix 1) and budget."

**Reasons for Decisions:**

"Following the notification of funding simplification on 2 September 2025, amendments to the Levelling Up Fund (now known as the Local Regeneration Fund) programmes no longer required sign-off from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. However, this did not remove the requirement for the Council to approve specific spending proposals. Significant interest had been generated by developers and end users for Council owned sites within the town centre and the regeneration site boundary required formal confirmation to proceed. (Councillor Preece requested that his name be recorded as having abstained on the vote on this report.)"

**Reason for Call-In (please explain):**

The speed and scale of this change in position raises serious concerns and, if it is correct that this was not the plan all along, suggests that it is a decision that has been made too fast to be democratically robust or reasonable. There are three facets of this call in: **(1) the demolition of the theatre; (2) the demolition of the civic centre to (a) allow a new shop to be built there and (b) require a new office to be built for CCDC work to continue and; (3) the potential sale of the Beecroft Road car park to allow for a privately built multi-storey car park.**

**(1) The Prince of Wales (PoW) Theatre**

On 15/10/2025 CCDC's planning control committee considered a town centre regeneration application CH/25/0189 which encompassed the PoW Theatre. Questions were asked by concerned councillors regarding the PoW building and councillors deemed it necessary to add a planning condition preventing the demolition of the theatre, which can be found at [paragraph 19 of the minutes](#) of the same meeting:

*"The demolition of the building hereby permitted shall be limited to the Forum shopping centre (and associated access ramps) and no other structure within the red line boundary without first obtaining a future planning consent. For the avoidance of doubt the demolition of the Theatre is excluded by this planning permission. Reason: In the interests of precision and defining the extent of consented demolition. This was moved by Councillor V. Jones and seconded by Councillor A. Muckley".*

51 days later cabinet made a decision to demolish the PoW. The papers that are available publicly do not give any background to the reasoning behind this change of heart and fail to adequately explain what brought cabinet to the conclusion that money originally earmarked for improving this asset should now be used for its demolition. There is no evidence, for instance, regarding:

- (i) whether CCDC has undertaken the work needed to robustly assess the financial, social and economic impact on the town or the district as a whole of this decision;

- (ii) whether a national tendering process has been considered. We know that community groups were asked to come forward to offer to take over the PoW as this has been confirmed by the CEO of CCDC at paragraph 24 of the minutes of the [Financially Responsible Scrutiny meeting dated 08/09/2025](#), but no attempt has been made to test the appetite of national industry specialists. Even in the most recent tendering process for a leisure provider, Councillor Williams confirmed that potential contractors were not asked to include the PoW in their bid;
- (iii) whether all officer work towards the instant report supporting cabinet's decision took place over that 51-day period (in which case the risk is that it was rushed), or whether officers had been working on a plan involving the demolition of the PoW over a longer period (in which case it could be perceived that members were misled by officers at the 15<sup>th</sup> October planning control committee meeting, or alternatively that officers had been working on these plans without adequate oversight by cabinet).

Equally, we do not believe that cabinet has given due consideration to how the theatre, which appears to be structurally sound, could be reopened. There has been a failure to undertake necessary options appraisals for the building or to run a national tendering process for the future operation of the theatre. The Theatres Trust also casts doubt on the validity of using Levelling Up Funds, once earmarked for developing the theatre, for its demolition.

This decision is based on a brief report prepared by officers and a decision by cabinet, following a discussion that lasted a matter of minutes. A decision of this magnitude should not have been taken in this way. Full council have not been consulted. The decision has significant, long-term consequences for the entire district, including implications for cultural provision, asset disposal, and the future financial position of the authority, which will be felt for generations to come. It should be given better scrutiny, where all elected members have an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

It is unclear in the report within the cabinet papers what alternatives have been considered. Why has there been no public consultation? Why has there been no formal tendering process? Thousands of people responded to a previous consultation regarding the closure of the theatre. It would be just and reasonable to both consult the public on the potential demolition of this beloved theatre and for a tendering process to be followed. Failure to do so leaves this council open to criticism and legal proceedings.

The economic prosperity scrutiny committee immediately following the cabinet decision was given inadequate time to prepare and were not invited to scrutinise such a financially and culturally significant decision. For the committee to have three working days, without sight of the cabinet minutes, before being given only an "update" is fundamentally unjust.

**(2) The demolition of the civic centre to (a) allow a new shop to be built there and (b) require a new office to be built for CCDC work to continue**

[Paragraph 1 included in confidential appendix 4a.]

With regards the proposed new council office buildings (item 12.6) the authors of this call-in are firstly reminded that, at the most recent responsible council scrutiny committee, S.151 officer Chris Forrester stated that CCDC have "*got maybe 18 months left in us*". Indeed, Head of Transformation and Assurance Judith Aupers also mentioned the issue, stating that had we not got local government regeneration coming we might (a) invest in apprenticeships (b) look to undertake a staff survey and (c) have more time to report back on staff vacancies. With this in mind, why is CCDC considering using precious financial and officer resources to build offices when it will cease to exist in the next few years? This requires further scrutiny and a call-in would allow councillors to ask appropriate questions.

**(3) the potential sale of the Beecroft Road car park to allow for a privately built multi-storey car park**

Item 12.4 of the report before cabinet states that CCDC are exploring whether there is an appetite from private investors to provide a multi-storey facility. To do so would strip this council of an income-generating asset.

We understand that the Levelling Up money needed to be allocated, in its first inception, to projects that private investment could not produce. The car park was part of the initial LUF bid, which suggests strongly that private investors were not interested in taking it on. Consequently, questions need to be asked. Why is this being considered, if previously private investment was not deemed to be available? Why is CCDC seeking to dispose of an income-generating asset? Is this bringing best value for tax-payers and supporting the financial sustainability of the council? Is this an indication that CCDC intends to sell its assets ahead of local government reorganisation? If so, where will the money be spent? Will this create a Cannock Chase, which is a small part of a unitary authority, stripped of its public assets?

**What are you proposing?**

We propose that this decision is quashed and that the report is **referred to full council** with a recommendation that they should resolve to:

1. Consider the officer's recommendations in the cabinet report, but:
  - (i) Take the demolition of the Prince of Wales Theatre out of the current regeneration scheme;
  - (ii) Not build a replacement shop for [redacted];
  - (iii) Not set aside £25,000 to pay to [redacted];
  - (iv) Not build alternative offices for CCDC;
  - (v) Not sell the Beecroft Road car park and, instead, agree to invest in it to make the facility better for residents.
2. Recommend to cabinet that a fair, national tendering process with regards the running of the Prince of Wales Theatre should take place.

**Please indicate below who should be invited to the Scrutiny Committee meeting?**

<b>Councillor(s)</b>	<b>Officer(s)</b>	<b>Representative from organisations / public</b>
John Preece	Chris Forrester	The Theatres Trust
Steve Thornley	Anna Nevin	CHAPS
Maureen Freeman	Dean Piper	Representative from the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre
David Williams	Gregg Stott	Cannock Chase Theatre Trust Chair Peter Sidgwick
Gary Samuels	Ian Curran	Josh Newbury MP
Sue Thornley	Tim Clegg	Cannock Arts Council

The request for call-in will only be valid if a total of 5 Members\* have supported it, and it is returned to the Chief Executive by no later than the deadline date on the published Cabinet Minutes.

*\*2 of whom must be Members of the relevant Scrutiny Committee, and none of whom may be Cabinet member.*

**Request made and supported by:**

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Andrea Muckley	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Jo Elson	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Darrell Mawle*	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Liz Bishop	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025
Jeff Hill*	Received via email	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2025

\*members of the Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

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## Procedure for Debating Call-in of Cabinet Decisions at Meetings of the Scrutiny Committees

### Notes:

*Prior to members of the Committee debating the call-in, other Members of the Council present and other invited persons who are not members of the Scrutiny Committee will be requested to sit in the public gallery.*

*The relevant Cabinet Member may remain in the chamber and answer questions put through the Chair. The Cabinet Member may speak at any time if invited by the Chair. The Chair will invite the Cabinet Member to exercise a right of reply at the end of the debate before the Proposer of the motion exercises their right of reply.*

*A Scrutiny Committee may exercise their statutory powers to invite such persons and request such information as they consider necessary to facilitate their examination of the matter and they adjourn the meeting if necessary to facilitate this.*

*Members of the Scrutiny Committee should be present for all of the debate prior to them exercising their vote to ensure that the Committee makes an informed decision based on the evidence presented.*

### Procedure

1. The Proposer, who shall be one of the members of the Scrutiny Committee requesting the call-in, shall read their motion, formally propose the motion and give the reasons for the call-in.
2. If none of the members of the Scrutiny Committee who requested the call-in are present, the Chair shall ask if any other member of the Scrutiny Committee will propose the motion. If no member proposes the motion the call-in will be deemed to have been withdrawn.
3. Once the motion has been seconded, the Chair shall allow those others of the five members who requested the call-in and who are present to speak before any debate.
4. During the course of the debate members of the Committee may propose minor amendments to the motion with the consent of the Proposer (or the stand-in Proposer).
5. The Committee may:
  - (a) reject the motion, or
  - (b) refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration with a recommendation.
  - (c) refer the matter to full Council with a recommendation for a decision.
6. A formal written decision will be made on the call-in within ten days of the Scrutiny Committee first meeting.