



Please ask for: Wendy Rowe
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7 September, 2021

Dear Councillor,

Economic Recovery Scrutiny Committee

4:00pm, Wednesday 15 September, 2021

Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

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

Yours sincerely,

Tim Clegg
Chief Executive

To: Councillors:

Thompson, Mrs. S.L. (Chairman)
Kraujalis, J.T. (Vice-Chairman)

Dunnett, Ms. A.J.
Frew, C.L.
Haden, Mrs. P.K.
Johnson, T.B.
Lyons, N.
McCall, M.

Startin, P.D.
Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Wilkinson, Ms. C.L.
Wilson, Mrs. L.J.
Witton, P.T.

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. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the Economic Recovery Scrutiny Committee held on 29 June 2021 (enclosed).

4. Quarter 1 PDP and Recovery Performance Information

To consider the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (4.1 – 4.15).

5 Car Park Payback Initiative

To consider the Briefing Note of the Head of Economic Prosperity (5.1 – 5.8)

Cllr Hewitt, Cabinet Member for Innovation and High Streets will be in attendance for this item.

6. Economic Recovery Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-22 - update

Verbal update from the Head of Economic Prosperity and Head of Housing and Partnerships

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Economic Recovery Scrutiny Committee
Held on Wednesday 29 June 2021 at 4:00pm
In the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Thompson, Mrs. S.L. (Chairman)
Kraujalis, J.T. (Vice-Chairman)

Dunnett, Ms. A.J. (arrived at 16:10)	Johnson, T.B. Lyons, N.
Frew, C.L.	Startin, P.D.
Haden, Mrs. P.K.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors Ms. C.L. Wilkinson, Mrs. L.J. Wilson and P.T. Witton.

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

No other declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

3. Minutes

The Minutes of the Promoting Prosperity Scrutiny Committee held on 17 March, 2021 were noted.

4. Introduction to the Role of the Economic Recovery Scrutiny Committee

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Housing and Partnerships that covered the following:

- Support for the Committee
- Background
- The Purpose of Scrutiny
- The Committee's Role and Remit
- Work Programme
- Undertaking a Review

She explained the role of Scrutiny to Members and how it should work effectively. The role of the Committee was then outlined, and it was explained that, whilst the Committee would not be able to make decisions, it could advise and give recommendations to Cabinet, Council and other Committees as appropriate.

The Committee could review and scrutinise current policies, decide if the policies were delivering the intended outcomes and develop new policies – influencing policy decisions before they were implemented. They could hold the ‘Executive’ to account and invoke the ‘call-in’ procedure prior to a decision being implemented, or review it afterwards.

Further information was provided on the monitoring, reviewing, and scrutinising the performance of the Council in relation to the discharge of the Council’s functions.

She outlined how the work programme would be developed along with information on how Members should determine which Scrutiny reviews should be undertaken.

5. End of Year PDP & Recovery Performance Information

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 5.1 – 5.27 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Economic Prosperity led Members through the report that advised on the position at the end of 2020/21 in respect of the progress of the Priority Delivery Plans (PDPs) and the Recovery Plans. He explained that the Committee would receive quarterly performance reports at each meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the year-end performance information relating to PDP’s as detailed in Appendices 1a-1d be noted.
- (B) That the year-end position relating to the Recovery Plans as detailed at Appendices 2a-2d be noted.
- (C) To note that the actions flagged with a yellow circle or an amber triangle at year-end will roll forward into the Priority Delivery Plans for 2021/22.

6. Economic Recovery Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2021-22

Consideration was given to the Joint Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity and Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 6.1 – 6.5 plus appendices of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Economic Prosperity outlined the report and referred Members to Appendix 3. He asked them to note that Corporate Property did not fall within the remit of the Economic Recovery Scrutiny Committee. This came under the remit of the Financially Resilient Council Scrutiny Committee.

He then referred Members to Appendix 5 – the proposed Work Programme for 2021/22. He explained that there were 3 further meetings of the Committee during 2021/22 along with any Working Groups that would be set up to undertake the reviews that were agreed. Officers would provide support to Members in relation to these Working Groups.

The Committee was then asked to consider the following suggestions for reviews that could be undertaken. The Head of Economic Prosperity explained that they should choose 1 or 2 items or alternatively, Members may wish to put forward any further suggestions.

- (i) Affordable Housing Delivery
- (ii) Cannock Town Centre Partnership
- (iii) Covid-19 Business Support grant support
- (iv) Car parking pilot initiative in Cannock and Rugeley Town Centres

The Head of Housing and Partnerships provided information in respect of the suggested review in relation to Affordable Housing Delivery and the Head of Economic Prosperity provided further information in relation to the other 3 suggestions.

Members discussed the possible review topics. In relation to Affordable Housing Delivery a Member stated that developers often produced viability assessments and did not meet the current 20% affordable housing contribution, so he had concern about increasing this to 30%. Other Members considered that it would be beneficial to undertake a review in relation to Affordable Housing Delivery at this time, as there were several major development schemes in the District and there would be a greater demand for affordable housing given the increase in unemployment rates due to the pandemic.

In relation to the Cannock Town Centre Partnership review a Member considered it sensible to allow the new administration to build up a relationship with the Partnership before undertaking a review. He also considered that, as the car parking pilot initiative had only been running for 2 weeks, it was premature to undertake a review at this time and it may be more appropriate to review this in September, if time allowed, when the pilot was coming to an end.

Another Member suggested that a review could be undertaken in respect of the consultation with regards to the Local Plan. Due to the pandemic the Council was not able to engage in traditional consultation methods. Work was on-going in relation to the review of the Local Plan and he suggested it may be beneficial to look at how consultation was being undertaken during the current Covid-19 restrictions and consider how consultation could be improved for the future.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that the two Scrutiny reviews for 2021/22 would be:

- Affordable Housing Delivery
- Review of consultation in respect of the Local Plan

It was agreed that the membership of the review to look at Affordable Housing Delivery would be made up of Councillors J.K. Kraujalis, N. Lyons, Mrs. P.K. Haden, C. Frew, Ms. A. Dunnett, Ms. C. Wilkinson and Mrs. L Wilson.

The membership of the review of consultation in respect of the Local Plan would be made up of Councillors T. Johnson, P. Startin, Mrs. H. Sutton, M. McCall, Mrs. S. Thompson and P. Witton.

Resolved:

(A) That the two Scrutiny reviews undertaken during 2021/22 would be as follows:-





- (i) Affordable Housing Delivery (Councillors J.K. Kraujalis, N. Lyons, Mrs. P.K. Haden, C. Frew, Ms. A. Dunnett, Ms. C. Wilkinson and Mrs. L Wilson).
- (ii) Review of consultation in respect of the Local Plan (Councillors T. Johnson, P. Startin, Mrs. H. Sutton, M. McCall, Mrs. S. Thompson and P. Witton).

The meeting closed at 16:34 pm.

CHAIRMAN

Priority Delivery Plan for 2021-22
Priority 1 – Supporting Economic Recovery

PROJECTS – Summary of Performance

Delivery of Projects for Q1					
				N/A	Total Number of Projects
Action completed	Project on Target	Work in progress but project slightly behind schedule < 3months	Action more than 3 months behind schedule – specific action required to address delay	Project not yet started	
2 (5%)	33 (87%)	2 (5%)	0	1 (3%)	38

Summary of Successes as at Quarter 1

A number of projects/actions have already been achieved in quarter 1 including:

- the production and launch of the tourism leaflet to coincide with the opening of the Designer Outlet,
- payment of re-start grants to eligible businesses,
- submission of the Levelling Up Fund bid for Cannock Town Centre; and
- organisation of the stakeholder event with registered providers.

Summary of Slippage as at Quarter 1

No significant slippage

1.1 Supporting jobs, enterprise and skills

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.1.1. Maximise the economic benefits of the opening of McArthurGlen Designer Outlet West Midlands							
Review and refresh of Economic Prosperity Strategy.	Production and consultation.			✓		Monitoring of economic indicators taking place. Initial preparatory work underway.	✓
	Present to Cabinet for approval.				✓		
Promotional leaflet production to coincide with opening of Designer Outlet.	Production and launch of leaflet.	✓				Leaflet now in circulation and PR launch carried out.	★
Work with McArthurGlen to develop a joint marketing plan to promote the District and encourage linked trips and dwell time in Cannock Chase.	Develop and implement marketing plan and identify resources.				✓	Meeting between officers and McArthurGlen held – marketing is still in launch phase at present. Progress all positive and ahead of programme on lettings.	✓
Transformational upgrade of Cannock Railway Station <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case development / design • Submit bids for funding 	Work with partners to commission next stage of design and engineering work.	✓				Network Rail have been commissioned to undertake further design and feasibility work for preferred option.	✓
	Report to Cabinet presenting outcome of design work, including updated cost plan and funding strategy.				✓		
1.1.2. Supporting local businesses							
Provision of advice and support to local businesses to resume operations and recover from Covid restrictions.	Support to businesses to enable them to comply with Covid regulations and guidance in line with timescales set out in Government roadmap.		✓			Covid support team in place and continuing to operate/visit/ advise businesses.	✓

Item No. 4.3

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
Full allocation of Government funded Covid business support programmes i.e., Local Restrictions Support Grant, Additional Restrictions Grant focusing on businesses affected by the pandemic and lockdown restrictions	Aim for full allocation of ARG by 30 th July as per MHCLG guidance.		✓			On target to spend full allocation via top up grants to those still affected by Covid.	✓
	Payment of Re-start grants.	✓				Re-start grants have been paid to eligible businesses.	
	Delivery of Apprenticeship and Training initiatives in partnership with Staffordshire County Council.				✓	Good initial spend and output delivery since launch -have until March 2022 to spend full amount.	
Delivery of Enterprise for Success and Let's Get Started initiatives in the District to help new businesses to start up.	Promote available support to eligible local residents.				✓	Marketing of initiatives on-going.	✓
Expand Federation of Small Business Membership in District to help survival rates of businesses.	Promote initiative and secure new Members take up.		✓			Promotion carried out over half of memberships allocated to date – will require further PR to secure full take up.	✓
1.1.3. Support for newly unemployed residents							
Working in partnership with LEPs, DWP, Staffordshire County Council to proactively respond to redundancy announcements	Monitor through Countywide redundancy task group numbers of reported redundancies and HR1 forms from Cannock Chase employers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Group continues to meet – no major impact being seen at present in District – may change when furlough scheme ends in September.	✓
Identify gaps in local provision and develop initiatives (if required) to further support unemployed residents.	Post furlough ending consider whether additional provision is needed to help address growing unemployment levels.			✓		Too early to give an indication as to whether additional provision will be required.	✓

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.1.4. Increasing skills levels and access to employment opportunities							
Work with Cannock College to deliver skills and apprenticeships opportunities to local residents	Assist with delivery of apprenticeships linked to engineering academy and recruitment of local employers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	PR continues, take up is steady	✓
	Aide the roll out of a new digital skills hub in Cannock and promote the local offer to local employers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Secured funding from SSLEP to enable delivery	
1.1.5. Ensure sufficient supply of employment land and workspace for small businesses							
Explore feasibility of encouraging more managed workspace in the District	Work with key partners to identify potential locations for future sites.				✓	Managed workspace/ incubation proposal included as part of Cannock Town Centre Levelling Up Fund bid.	✓

1.2 Reshaping our town centres

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.2.1. Identify external funding / investment opportunities							
Identify external funding opportunities	Submit a business case for the Levelling Up Fund for Cannock Town Centre	✓				Bid for Cannock Town Centre submitted on 18 th June – decision expected in autumn 2021	✓
	Fully commit and spend the Council's Welcome Back Fund to support re-opening of town centres				✓	Discussions with Town/Parish Councils and Cannock Town Centre Partnership on-going	

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
Develop a pipeline of projects to reshape our town centres and provide focus for future bidding opportunities	Develop an investment plan to include pipeline of projects			✓	✓	Work underway to start identifying potential list of projects	✓
1.2.2. Regeneration / reshaping of Cannock Town Centre							
Cannock Town Centre Prospectus	Engagement with private sector with the aim of securing investment for identified Cannock Prospectus sites	✓	✓	✓	✓	Ongoing discussions with local developers	✓
Land disposal at Avon Road	Agree Heads of Terms for disposal	✓				Issue with establishing a secondary access – may affect delivery of overall scheme	▲
	Planning application to be submitted by purchaser		✓			See above comment	
Business case for demolition of MSCP and Indoor Market site to Cabinet	Report to Cabinet setting out business case for demolition including options appraisal		✓			Demolition contractors appointed to advise on project – Levelling Up fund bid outcome not due until Autumn 2021	✓
Develop a Cannock Masterplan	Procure consultants to undertake masterplan production					GBSLEP bid for funding submitted – pending review/feedback	✓
	Prepare specification / undertake procurement			✓			
	Award contract				✓		

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.2.3. Reshaping Rugeley Town Centre and surrounding areas – capitalising upon the re-development of Rugeley Power Station							
Identify options for the Rugeley Market Hall and adjoining land	Undertake an options assessment				✓		✓
Identify options for addressing vacant units in Rugeley Town Centres	Undertake a Baseline assessment of vacant units including engagement with private landlords and partners				✓	Vacant units in town centres continue to be monitored.	✓
1.2.4. Review the Council's car parking strategy							
Undertake parking review across the District	Undertake pilot car parking initiative in Cannock & Rugeley Town Centres	✓	✓	✓		Pilot commenced 21 st June to 21 st September – circa 50 businesses participating	✓
	Report to Cabinet setting out outcome of Pilot and options for future			✓			
	Review of car parking across District - Procure consultants - Undertake review			✓	✓		

1.3 Increasing affordable housing

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.3.1. Investment of £12.9m to deliver in the region of 100 new Council properties for rent							
Hawks Green – complete development	Completion of handover of Council Houses			✓		Handover of Council homes commenced in Q1.	✓

Item No. 4.7

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
	Completion of Hawks Green Development by 31 March 2022				✓	Scheme in progress and on target to complete by 31 March 2022	
Aelfgar Development Scheme	Completion of land sale		✓			Land sale on target to complete in Q2.	✓
	Seek outline planning permission		✓			Outline planning permission issued Q2.	
	Completion of procurement exercise and selection of contractor			✓		Initial actions with framework in progress.	
	Start on site				✓		
Chadsmoor development	Submission of Cabinet report for scheme approval		✓			Pre-planning consultation completed Q2, and report prepared for August Cabinet.	✓
	Planning application submission			✓			
1.3.2. Ensure the Local Plan includes the necessary provisions for affordable housing contributions							
Emerging Local Plan will update affordable housing contributions with new viability evidence	Viability Study to be available Summer 2021 that will inform affordable housing requirements in Reg 19 Local Plan.			✓			✓
Undertake revision of affordable housing policies in line with Local Plan timetable	To be undertaken on receipt of viability study and incorporated into policies in Reg 19 version of Local Plan.			✓			✓

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.3.3. Work with partners / Affordable Housing Registered Providers							
Set up and deliver an annual Stakeholder Event to make strategic links and build strong relationships with key registered providers	Arrange first meeting since pandemic, to be held virtually.	✓				An operational meeting has taken place to discuss on-going issues	✓

1.4 Well designed communities

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.4.1 Adoption of a new Local Plan for the District by the end of 2023							
New Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2021 to set out timetable for delivery by 2023	New LDS adopted April 2021 which sets out timetable for Local Plan Review and adoption before end 2023.	✓				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LDS adopted April 2021. ▪ Preferred Option consultation completed April 30th 2021 (NB Proposed Planning Bill – reforms to planning system may affect overall timetable)	✓
	Regulation 19 Local Plan – Winter 2021/22 Consultation			✓	✓		
1.4.2 Ensure our Local Plan policies achieve higher design and environmental standards with new housing developments							
Local Plan 'Greener Futures' policy in preparation that will include higher environmental and design standards applied to new housing developments.	Preferred Option introduces Greener Futures Policy. Consultation responses and Viability Study will be considered in potential revisions to the policy.	✓					★


Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.4.3 Support our towns and parishes to plan their neighbourhoods							
Progress current and future Neighbourhood Plans within the district.	Continue to work with Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Planning Groups to progress Neighbourhood Plans.				✓		✓
1.4.4 Ensure our local communities secure benefits from new developments and investment in local infrastructure							
Emerging Local Plan will prioritise new sustainable development allocations with emphasis on supporting infrastructure.	Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan scheduled Winter 2021.			✓			✓

1.5 Clean and green recovery

Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
1.5.1 Support our clean growth ambition by encouraging green jobs and investment							
Identify and support businesses, supply chains and investors that are seeking to create green jobs in our District.	Investigate potential opportunities to attract new businesses or grow existing businesses to create new jobs				✓		✓
1.5.2 Work with public bodies and site owner to regenerate the Rugeley Power Station site and deliver 'zero carbon' ambitions							
Work with Engie to progress plans for the site.	Completion of demolition of site	✓	✓			Demolition of cooling towers took place on 6 th June 2021	✓
	Planning application for Riverside Park and spine road				✓		




Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
Zero Carbon Rugeley – completion of Pilot project for Smart Local Energy System and dissemination of findings.	Disseminate findings of project and work with Engie to identify implementation options				✓		✓
1.5.3 Work towards developing zero carbon homes (Passivhaus standard) on Council housing developments							
Aelfgar Development Scheme – undertake a design and build procurement based on Passivhaus principles	Outline planning permission granted		✓			Land sale on target to complete in Q2. Outline planning permission granted Q2.	✓
	Completion of land sale		✓				
	Completion of procurement exercise and selection of contractor			✓		Initial actions with framework in progress.	
	Start on site				✓		
1.5.4 Produce a funded retrofit (carbon zero) programme for the Council's housing stock and commence implementation							
Stock Condition Survey – Commission survey to establish stock condition for 20% of stock and produce 5-year cyclical programme to establish and monitor 100% of stock	Develop Asset Management system to record and report on asset data	✓				Asset Management system built, go live delayed to early August due to Project team availability. No impact on procurement exercise action	▲
	Completion of procurement exercise and selection of service provider		✓				
	Completion of Surveys			✓			
	Annual update of 30yr business plan						



Item No. 4.11





Projects	Actions and Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Progress	Symbol
Development of strategy to deliver carbon neutral housing stock and development of retrofit work programme	Procurement of Housing Climate Change Action Plan		✓			This work has been added to the wider piece of work to develop a costed action plan for delivering the Council's targets re carbon neutrality. A provider has been appointed	
	Production of the Housing Climate Change Action Plan			✓			
	Produce Housing Asset Management Plan				✓		
	Develop work programme to incorporate Climate Change Actions	2022-23					
	Participate in a joint bid to pilot retrofit of properties to gain an understanding of new technologies and measures required for CCDC stock						
EPC – Carry out programme over 5 years to establish Energy Performance for the stock	Completion of procurement exercise and selection of service provider			✓			N/A
	Record EPC's in Asset Management system annually for reporting purposes				✓		

Priority Delivery Plan for 2021-22
Priority 1 – Supporting Economic Recovery

DIRECTION OF TRAVEL INDICATORS





Improved situation	Situation worsened	No change	
			
1	3	1	

Direction of Travel Indicator	Reporting Frequency (Q or A)	Last year's outturn	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Trend
Objective 1.1 - Supporting jobs, enterprise and skills								
Unemployment rate	Q		Aim to keep below WM rate					
• Cannock Chase		5.4%		5%				
• West Midlands		7.4%		7%				
Youth unemployment	Q		Aim to reduce gap to reach WM average					
• Cannock Chase		11.2%		10.7%				
• West Midlands		10.3%		9.6%				
NVQ 3 attainment rates	A	46.9% Jan 2020- Dec 2020	To increase levels year on year					
NVQ 4 attainment rates	A	28.3% Jan 2020- Dec 2020	To increase levels year on year					




Direction of Travel Indicator	Reporting Frequency (Q or A)	Last year's outturn	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Trend
Objective 1.2 - Reshaping our town centres								
Town Centre vacancy rates (measured as % of total units)	Q		Keep vacancy rate under 10%					
Cannock		25.8%		26.6%				
Hednesford		5.6%		4.3%				
Rugeley		4.3%		5.6%				
Combined		n/a		13%				
Objective 1.3 - Increasing affordable housing								
Number of Affordable Housing units delivered per annum	A	60	231					
Objective 1.4 - Well-designed communities								
Housing completions	A	New indicator	*					
Employment land developed	A	New indicator	*					
Neighbourhood Plans adopted	A	New indicator	*					

* New indicator – baseline to be established to set target for next year

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Summary of Performance as at Q1			
			
Target Exceeded	Target Achieved	Performance Slightly Below Target	Performance Significantly Below Target
		3	

Performance Indicator	Reporting Frequency (Q or A)	Last year's outturn	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Target Achieved?
Objective 1.1 - Supporting jobs, enterprise and skills								
Number of businesses supported	A	60 for each LEP	n/a					
Number of enrolments on Digital Academy and Engineering Academy at Cannock Campus of South Staffordshire College	A	New indicator for 21-22	*					
Objective 1.2 - Reshaping our town centres								
Number of residential units consented / completed in Town Centre	A	New indicator for 21-22	*					
Commercial and non-retail floorspace consented / completed	A	New indicator for 21-22	*					

Performance Indicator	Reporting Frequency (Q or A)	Last year's outturn	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Target Achieved?
Objective 1.3 - Increasing affordable housing								
Number of Council homes delivered	Q	0	22	4				
Objective 1.4 Well-designed communities								
Amount of CIL funds secured	Q	£461k	n/a	£37k				N/A
Amount of S106 funds secured	Q	£191k	n/a	£621k				N/A
Major Planning Applications determined within time	Q	100%	> 60% within 13 weeks	50%				
Number of Major Planning Applications	Q	n/a	n/a	2				N/A
Non-major Planning Applications determined within time	Q	75%	> 70% within 8 weeks	62%				
Number of Non-Major Planning applications	Q	n/a	n/a	98				N/A
Number of Planning Applications	Q	n/a	n/a	107				N/A
Number of Enforcement Cases	Q	n/a	n/a	56				N/A

*New indicator – baseline to be established this year on which to base target for future years

Briefing Note of:	Head of Economic Prosperity
Contact Officer:	Debbie Harris
Telephone No:	Ext 4490

ECONOMIC RECOVERY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 SEPTEMBER 2021
BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING CAR PARK PAYBACK PILOT INITIATIVE

1 Purpose of Briefing note

- 1.1 The purpose of this briefing note is to provide Members with summary details of how the car park payback pilot initiative operating in Cannock and Rugeley Town centres has performed to date.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed to carry out a 3 month pilot initiative back in June 2021 as part of the Additional Restrictions Grant Policy adoption by the Council.
- 2.2 Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) monies were allocated to the Council primarily to assist those businesses that were affected by Covid 19 and to help recovery.
- 2.3 The Council are carrying out this review to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot initiative and to make recommendations as to whether it should continue for a further 3 months utilising the top up Additional Restriction Grant monies awarded to the Council.
- 2.4 The level of grant initially awarded to those businesses participating in the scheme was £500 per business. A key finding is that none of the businesses have refunded car parking vouchers to the value of the grant. Refunds range from £0.00 to £130.00 giving an average refund made of £27.00 across all the businesses. A key consideration should the pilot be extended would be to reduce the level of grant awarded to the participating businesses to reflect the actual amount of voucher refunds being given.
- 2.5 Members need to consider if the total value of sales (£31,251.29) achieved to date exceeds the amount of total grant (£24,500.00) given are sufficient grounds to justify the pilot extension.
- 2.6 Consideration should be given to the Economic Development staffing implications of extending the pilot based on available resources and established Council priorities. This scheme would be one of several new ARG initiatives that would run in parallel with one another managed by the same section.

- 2.7 There has been extensive marketing campaigns advertising the pilot, however, the overall take up rate has been lower than anticipated. Feedback from businesses has identified that this has been partly due to the monitoring requirements as part of the Terms and Conditions and auditing requirements.
- 2.8 Rugeley voucher reimbursement rates may have been affected by the number of existing free short stay parking facilities at the local supermarkets that are all within walking distance of the town centre. This has meant that there has been little advantage in seeking a car park refund.
- 2.9 Businesses not actively promoting the scheme themselves has a direct affect on the number of vouchers being redeemed. It is difficult to police and enforce marketing expectations upon participating businesses.
- 2.10 Businesses have requested if the qualifying spend level of £10 or more could be lowered to capture more customers, this could potentially increase the take up rate.
- 2.11 It should be noted that if the pilot was to be extended into the Christmas period this would be welcomed by the traders as this is considered the peak trading period for town centre businesses.
- 2.12 As demonstrated by the feedback from the businesses, the overwhelming response is that the initiative has been well received and, in some instances, has been a lifeline to help keep their business operating.

3 Detail

- 3.1 In accordance with the ARG Policy, Terms and Conditions were drawn up for all participating businesses to adhere to and are shown in Appendix 1. The pilot was only rolled out in Cannock and Rugeley Town Centres as Hednesford Town Centre already has free car parking operating in the area.
- 3.2 All administration of the pilot has been carried out by the Economic Development Team, with exception to the initial referral process where support was provided by Rugeley Town Council and Cannock Town Centre Partnership.
- 3.3 A total of 49 businesses participated across the two town centres (34 in Cannock and 15 in Rugeley). Grants awarded total £24,500.00 (£17,000.00 in Cannock and £7,500.00 in Rugeley)
- 3.4 As at the end of week 10 (of the 13 week trial period) collectively, there has been a total of 654 car parking £2 refunds been processed by the participating businesses. This equates to £1,308.00 of refunds being given to patrons of the businesses (Cannock: 565 refunds equating to £1,130.00. Rugeley: 89 refunds equating to £178.00)
- 3.5 As part of the Terms and Conditions, businesses were expected to capture the value of each transaction that related to the voucher refund. Transactions had to

be to the value of £10 or more. Collectively, a total of £31,251.29 worth of sales from the 49 businesses. (Cannock: £24,483.16 sales. In Rugeley: £6,768.13 sales).

- 3.6 It is difficult to say if the transactions above are solely due to the car park refund initiative, or whether these sales figures would have occurred even if the pilot scheme was not operating. Furthermore, if comparing solely the total number of transactions versus the total amount of grants awarded, the scheme has been successful in generating additional business. However, when broken down to the two town centres Rugeley is slightly below the level of grants awarded compared to sales. Grants awarded total £24,500.00 (£17,000.00 in Cannock and £7,500.00 in Rugeley), transactions total £31,251.29 (Cannock: £24,483.16 sales, Rugeley: £6,768.13 sales)
- 3.7 If we consider the total administration (Economic Development staff costs) and operating costs (marketing, ticket machine adaptations) incurred by the Council for the pilot, it will not offer value for money based purely on the sales achieved. If the pilot is extended some of the initial set up costs would be saved as marketing materials could be re-used. Please note the Welcome Back Fund has covered all costs for the marketing activities carried out to date.
- 3.8 Feedback has been sought from participating businesses on what they thought of the initiative, any suggestions on how to improve the initiative and what they would use any remaining grant funds for.
Highlights from the feedback forms include:
- Good idea as customers say it helps with parking costs
 - Great to get people into the town
 - Nice to see small businesses being supported and promoted
 - More advertising in different formats Parish newsletters.
 - Make it more obvious on voucher
 - Lower the qualifying spend level
 - Keep it running up to and over Christmas
 - Use surplus grant monies to: In store promotional activities, advertising, repaint shop internally. Buy new equipment and new product lines.
Operational costs to keep business running
- 3.9 A marketing plan was put in place to support the pilot, this included:
- A suite of social media adverts with key messages (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)
 - Facebook adverts – pre and post launch
 - A section on the Council's website with a front-page feature/advert
 - Window stickers displayed in shop windows
 - An article in Chase Matters
 - Banners on railings in town centre (6ft x 2ft)
 - Dibond poster displays (A4) on posts around car parks
 - A press release issued to the local media
 - Briefing notes to staff, Members and partners
 - Sign up flyer for businesses

- Radio advertising on Cannock Chase Radio (4 weeks campaign)

3.10 Facebook analytics show the pilot had:

- 11 posts on Facebook from 16 June – 1 September
- The link to the web page for more information has been clicked 212 times
- The various posts have been shared 45 times
- The reach in total was 29,561 (this number means our posts were seen by this number of individuals during the period above)
- Engagement has been good. The Councils engagement rates always increase when using paid advertising as this extends out of our current audience of followers which is currently 11,339.

3.11 When comparing historical car parking income for the same period as the pilot the Council has no ticket data for 2020. The car park ticket machines had SIM card issues from May 2020 until the machines were changed in December 2020 (when new SIMS were installed). Therefore, we only have cash data from the ticket machines once emptied.

3.12 A snapshot of actual car park monthly income received (cash from machines) during the pilot period i.e. from w/c 5 July 2021 to w/c 26 July 2021 was £40,172.50 for Cannock Town Centre and Rugeley Town Centre Car Park income was £9,855.20. This compares to July 2019 figures: Cannock Town Centre - £62,564.50 and Rugeley Town Centre £12,564.90.

3.13 Ticket sales for the same period above also show a reduction i.e :

	July 2021	July 2019
Cannock	25,480	41,334
Rugeley	6,410	9,456

3.14 It is worth stressing overall car parking income to the Council is down approx. 40% since COVID, therefore it is risky comparing any like for like figures against previous years. People have changed their shopping habits and lockdowns, limited high street openings have all impacted on the car parking figures. There is no way of determining whether the Refund Initiative has brought people back to the high street through this comparison.

3.15 Options for consideration:

- a) Close the scheme on 21st September 2021.
- b) Extend the pilot up to Christmas 2021 – utilising additional ARG monies received by the Council.
- c) Look at the potential to amend the scheme to make it more attractive to shoppers i.e. £2 refund based on £5 transaction.
- d) Consider other ways of incentivising people to visit the town centre i.e., customer loyalty / discount scheme and work up alternative schemes to present to Cabinet.

3.16 The Economic Recovery Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on the options at 3.15 or suggest other options for consideration by Cabinet.

- 3.17 In summary, the Pilot has been well received by local traders. However, the data analysed so far does not indicate that the initiative has generated much in the way of additional footfall, as evidenced by the number of refunds issued to shoppers by participating businesses and looking at car parking income / sales levels. Furthermore, members should take into account, the considerable amount of resource required to administer and monitor the scheme and should any extension of the pilot be approved, staffing implications would need to be considered alongside other priorities of the Economic Development Team. Based on the available data, the pilot does not appear to offer good value for money.

4 Implications (if applicable)

4.1 Financial implications

The pilot initiative is funded from ARG monies awarded to the Council from BEIS. Any pilot extension would be funded from ARG top up monies received by the Council. ARG monies need to have been spent in full by 31st March 2022. ARG cannot be used to replenish lost Council income from operating the Pilot. ARG can only be spent on those businesses that have been or continue to be affected by Covid – 19.

4.2 Legal implications

Making sure ARG monies are spent in accordance with the funders eligibility criteria is essential to avoid any potential clawback of monies from the Council. The Council uses the application process to capture evidence from applicants regarding their eligibility and utilises the business rates system 'Comino' to maintain an audit record of the decisions taken and evidence obtained.

4.3 HR implications

As detailed in the report the Council must be mindful of staffing resources required to administer and operate the initiative and any extension.

4.4 Risk implications

Managing the risk of clawback from the funders is controlled as much as possible through the application procedures and terms and conditions that have been put in place. The ARG policy adopted by the Council clearly identifies eligibility criteria for accessing support and this is published on the Councils' website.

5 Appendices

Appendix 1	Terms and Conditions for participating businesses
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Background Papers

None

Appendix 1

TERMS & CONDITIONS – EXAMPLE

Dear Town Centre Business,

You have expressed an interest in participating in the 3-month Town Centre Car Parking Payback Pilot Initiative. This initiative will commence 21st June 2021 – 21st September 2021, operating across Cannock & Rugeley Town Centres.

This email confirms your eligibility to participate in the initiative, subject to you accepting the Terms and Conditions below and completing and returning the enclosed declaration.

This email must be returned to qualify for the £500 grant.

This initiative is to support Cannock and Rugeley Town Centres to help recover from the pandemic by introducing a new pilot initiative aimed at boosting footfall and trade for local independent businesses.

The proposal is to offer shoppers the ability to receive a refund of £2 on the cost of their parking ticket if they spend £10 or more in participating independent shops and hospitality businesses in a single transaction.

Each participating business will be offered a cash grant of £500 from the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant funding allocation from HM Government to be able to issue the refunds to customers with a valid ticket/voucher and in return they would be asked to monitor the number of tickets refunded and submit weekly returns to the Council.

Participating businesses will need to adhere to the following **Terms & Conditions**:

- This initiative is only available to independent traders/businesses operating from fixed permanent units within Cannock & Rugeley town centre (boundaries as defined by the local plan and Rugeley area action plan)
- Participating businesses need to have reached an agreement with the council (e.g. email) whereby both parties have consented to be part of the initiative.
- A grant of £500 will be paid to each participating business to cover the 3 month trial period and to cover the reimbursements.
- Businesses will need to display the window decal supplied by the council, informing the shopper that they can claim their £2 refund in this establishment.
- Participating council owned car parks are: -

Cannock council-owned car parks:

Rugeley council-owned car parks:

- **BEECROFT ROAD**
 - **AVON ROAD**
 - **BACKCROFTS**
 - **DANILO ROAD**
 - **RAILWAY STATION, GIRTON ROAD**
 - **FRONT OF COUNCIL CIVIC CENTRE OFFICES**
 - **BRUNSWICK ROAD (REAR OF COUNCIL OFFICES)**
- **FORGE ROAD**
 - **MARKET HALL**
 - **MARKET STREET**
 - **TAYLORS LANE**
 - **ST PAULS ROAD**
- Car parking ticket machines will be configured to issue two tickets, one for display in the vehicle and the other for the customer to take with them and present for redemption in store.
 - If the customer has purchased their ticket by phone then the business would need to see this on the handset and make a note of any reference number/time/date purchased/which car park
 - A customer must spend £10 or more, in one transaction, one shop – to qualify for the £2 refund.
 - The customer must hand their second car parking ticket to the retailer/business for retention. Only 1 transaction per ticket
 - The retailer/business must carry out audit checks on the ticket, namely they should check that the date is the date of purchase and redemption, that it was purchased in a council-owned car park (see list above)
 - Once satisfied that all is compliant, £2 cash would be given to the customer from the £500 grant that the council have issued
 - The business completes a monitoring form provided by the council showing details of the parking fee being refunded
 - The monitoring form must be emailed to the council each Monday (we will accept either an electronically completed form or a photograph of a handwritten form)
 - The business retains any original paper tickets for a period of 6 months
 - If parking is purchased by phone, then relevant details shall be completed on the form
 - The person issuing the refund would then initial the monitoring form to say £2 handed to the customer and all checks completed.
 - The Council reserves the right to visit participating businesses to check for compliance with the scheme e.g. to check signage and original tickets
 - All businesses participating shall consent to having their names/details displayed on social media to encourage more visitors/shoppers into the town centres and emphasise where they can obtain their refund.
 - If after the 3 month trial there are funds remaining from the £500 grant, the business can reinvest this back into their business and is not required to return any funds to the council.

- Any business shown not to be actively participating after signing up to the initiative will be deemed as not to be acting in the spirit of the agreement between the two parties

Any grant monies not used by the business on issuing refunds to customers can be retained by the business to support other operational costs, this is in recognition that the retailers and hospitality businesses are recovering from the pandemic and will benefit from direct financial assistance from the Council.

To take part in this initiative please complete the declaration below and return to EconDev@cannockchasedc.gov.uk by no later than **14th June 2021**.

To the Business Grants Team,

Declaration

I confirm that by completing and submitting this form, I am agreeing to abide by the above Terms & Conditions. I also understand that the grant is taxable and that the Council has a duty to prevent and detect fraudulent claims so will share my details with HMRC and other Government Agencies as appropriate.

Company or Business Name	
Name of Person making application	
Position within the company:	
Date:	