

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
PROMOTING PROSPERITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH, 2019 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

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

Foley, D. Stretton, Mrs. P.Z.
Hewitt, P.M. Tait, Ms. L.
Hoare, M.W.A. Witton, P.T.
Johnson, T.B.

20. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.I. Lea, P.D. Startin and Ms. C.L. Wilkinson.

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

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

22. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

23. Briefing Note – Working Group to Review the Street Market

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 4.1 – 4.3 plus Appendices of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Economic Prosperity explained that a Working Group had been established to review the Cannock street market. The agenda and notes of all three Working Group meetings had been attached to the agenda and Members noted that representatives from the current market operator, Sketts and the newly formed Cannock Town Centre Partnership (CTCP) had attended one of the meetings. It had been a detailed process and Members had gained a better understanding of the current market.

The Principal Property Services Officer then led Members through the Briefing Note which provided details of the work undertaken by the Group. She explained that Sketts were reasonably pleased with the Friday street market; it had regular and satisfied traders and a regular customer base. They were happy to consider operating a Tuesday street market subject to positive research. The Group had spoken to the representative from the CTCP, Angela Haynes, whose role was to facilitate and support the CTCP. The Working Group considered that running events alongside the street market attracted customers into the town centre and noted that working collaboratively would be beneficial in improving the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.

She then outlined the following recommendations proposed by the Working Group:-

- (A) That the current contract with Sketts be extended for a 12 month period from 31 October, 2019.
- (B) That Sketts be asked to undertake a survey to establish whether there was any appetite for operating the street market for an additional day (Tuesday).
- (C) That should the outcome of the survey be positive Sketts be asked to trial the Tuesday street market during the summer of 2019 with the possibility of including this additional day within the contract when it was renewed in November 2020.
- (D) That the new contract specification should include a requirement for the street market operator to
 - (i) Develop links and work in partnership with the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Village to create initiatives to attract customers to the town centre
 - (ii) Work alongside the Cannock Town Centre Partnership in organising events to promote the town centre with the aim of increasing visitors
- (E) That the positive work of the Cannock Town Centre Partnership in organising events to promote the town centre should be acknowledged, encouraged and supported.

The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to comment. A Member sought advice on whether consideration had been given to operating the street market on a Saturday. The Principal Property Services Officer advised that Sketts had recently trialled a Saturday market but this had not proved to be popular. The reason for this was that the Friday traders had many other options for trading in alternative towns on a Saturday. The Chairman made reference to Penkridge market which was open on Saturdays and was very popular. Members noted that the Cannock Saturday market had to compete with Penkridge market for customers and traders.

The Chairman then referred to a new food market that was to take place in the town centre during the summer on Wednesdays. The Group had not been aware of this proposal during their review. The Principal Property Services Officer confirmed that there had been a press release from the company proposing to run this food market known as "Eat Street". It would operate every Wednesday between June to September and, depending on how well it was received, additional dates may be added. The company was seeking local food businesses to get involved.

A Member sought further information about the street market operator working with the McArthurGlen Designer outlet village. The Principal Property Services Officer explained that the Working Group had acknowledged there was a need to ensure that Cannock town centre attracted visitors once the designer outlet village opened. They had discussed the operation of a shuttle bus from the site to the town and noted the need to ensure advertising was placed within the outlet village outlining what was on offer within the town centre.

A Member advised that he had spoken to some traders in the town centre and they were not happy about the street market as it was affecting trade and shops were closing. He considered that it was possible more shops could close if the street market operated for an additional day. The Chairman was not of the same opinion and advised that the representative from the CTCP had indicated that traders welcomed the Friday street market as it attracted more visitors in to the town. Another Member added that the loss of shops was not due to the street market – they were closing regardless of whether a street market was operated.

A Councillor made reference to the Bicester and Cheshire Oaks designer outlet villages and commented that towns nearby benefited as the designer villages attracted visitors in to the towns. The town centres offered a different range of goods to what the designer villages offered and the effect on them had been positive.

The Chairman referred to the work of the CTCP who were arranging a number of events in the town centre during the coming months. They would be working in partnership with other organisations in order to attract visitors to the town centre. The events would be advertised on Cannock Radio station, on Arriva buses, in the local college and on social media.

The Head of Economic Prosperity reiterated the importance of developing links with the McArthurGlen designer outlet village to ensure that visitors were aware of the town centre and of any events and markets taking place. He acknowledged that high streets were struggling throughout the country. The Government had recognised this and a fund had been set up inviting bids from Local Authorities. There was a need to look at the regeneration of the town centres and to understand that they would need to provide more than just the retail offer in the future.

The Chairman sought the Committees view on the recommendations of the Working Group. The Committee agreed with the recommendations as outlined on paragraph 3.7 (A) to (E) of the briefing note and noted that these would be considered by Cabinet on 18 April, 2019.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet on 18 April, 2019 be asked to consider the following recommendations from the Working Group to review the street market:-

- (A) That the current contract with Sketts be extended for a 12 month period from 31 October, 2019.
- (B) That Sketts be asked to undertake a survey to establish whether there was any appetite for operating the street market for an additional day (Tuesday).
- (C) That should the outcome of the survey be positive Sketts be asked to trial the Tuesday street market during the summer of 2019 with the possibility of including this additional day within the contract when it was renewed in November 2020.
- (D) That the new contract specification should include a requirement for the street market operator to
 - (i) Develop links and work in partnership with the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Village to create initiatives to attract customers to the town centre
 - (ii) Work alongside the Cannock Town Centre Partnership in organising events to promote the town centre with the aim of increasing visitors
- (E) That the positive work of the Cannock Town Centre Partnership in organising events to promote the town centre should be acknowledged, encouraged and supported.

24. Quarter 3 Promoting Prosperity Priority Delivery Plan 2018/19 update

Members considered and noted the latest performance information for the 2018/19 Promoting Prosperity Priority Delivery Plan (PDP) (Item 5.1 – 5.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Committee noted that overall performance was on track with 87% of projects being on target. The Head of Economic Prosperity then led Members through the actions detailed in the PDP, providing progress updates where necessary.

With regard to the Cannock Town Centre Prospectus he advised that work had slipped slightly and it was now due to be completed in the summer of 2019. Consultants had been appointed and they were working on how to best reposition the town centre. Consideration was being given to other uses for town centres, such as residential/commercial. A funding bid was due to be submitted by the Council for the Future High Street Funds.

Reference was made to Rugeley Power Station and Members noted that a number of community engagement events had been undertaken. A planning

application for the site was to be submitted in May 2019. Demolition works have commenced.

The Head of Housing and Partnerships then led Members through the actions she was responsible for in the PDP, giving updates as necessary.

She made reference to the £12.6m investment to provide additional affordable homes across the district, advising that the development of the majority of garage sites were on track. With regards to the Hawks Green Depot site she explained that 51% of the site had been set aside for housing requirements. Outline planning discussions had taken place for the development of 44 one, two and three bedroom homes and soft market testing was being undertaken.

The meeting closed at 4.45 pm.

CHAIRMAN