

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CUSTOMERS AND CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 12 MARCH 2018 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Foley, D. (Chairman)

Cartwright, Mrs. S.M.	Sutherland, M.
Grice, Mrs. D. (substitute)	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Grocott, M.R.	Whitehouse, Miss S.
Johnson, T.B.	Woodhead, P.E.
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	

13. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor Miss M.J. Dudson (Vice-Chairman), Miss J. Cooper, P.A. Snape and P.T. Witton.

Councillor Mrs D. Grice was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Miss M.J. Dudson.

14. 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.

15. Minutes

Minute No. 11: Scrutiny Review of the Financial Recovery Plan (FRP)

A Member commented that at the previous meeting concerns had been raised about the potential loss of income to the Council owing to likely delays in redeveloping the former Rugeley Power Station (RPS) site because of HS2, and requested that a formal recommendation be submitted to Cabinet to seek compensation from the Government should any such delays occur.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November, 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

- (B) Cabinet, at its meeting to be held on 19 April, 2018, be requested to write to the Government seeking compensation for loss of income should development of the former Rugeley Power Station site be delayed by using the site as a base for HS2 building works.

16. Quarter 3 2017/18 Customers & Corporate Priority Delivery Plan Update

Members considered and noted the latest performance information for the Customers & Corporate Priority Delivery Plan (PDP) 2017/18 (Item 4.1 – 4.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Governance and Corporate Services reported that of the seven actions included in the PDP, progress was delayed on the following for the reasons given in the update report:

- Development of the Customer Access Strategy – as reported at the previous meeting, work on developing the Strategy had been deferred until 2018-19.
- Review of call handling operation between the Contact Centre and the Social Alarm Service – further to the update given at the previous meeting, the Social Alarms team moved into the Civic Centre on 16 January, 2018, and therefore it was still expected that the review would commence in 2018/19 instead.

A Member commented that apparently discussions had taken place about seeking closure of the Rugeley Area Office. The Head of Governance and Corporate Services replied that conversations had taken place about possible relocation, however these discussions were still in a very early stage and no changes were imminent. The Member then requested that the relevant Cabinet portfolio leader be asked to provide a progress update on this matter.

17. Scrutiny Review of Electoral Registration and Polling Stations

The Chairman outlined that the purpose of the review was outlined in the template included with the agenda (Item 5.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Members received a presentation from the Democratic & Resilience Services Manager which covered:

- Individual Electoral Registration (IER):
 - Changes to registration processes;
 - Relevant legislation;
 - Annual Registration (Canvass);
 - Registration rates;
 - Registration statistics;
 - Postal votes.
- Polling Stations:
 - Legislation;
 - Requirements (Accessibility);
 - Review process;
 - Other issues;

- Use of Premises – Schools etc. and Alternatives.

A Member queried how the Register was updated in the event of an individual passing away. The Democratic & Resilience Services Manager replied that such changes would only be made when formally notified, which was usually through updates directly from the Registrar's Service, via Council Tax or other facilities such as 'Tell Us Once'.

Members then noted that:

- Low registration rates (and low election turnout) was a national issue, and generally more of an issue in high density urban areas;
- Locally, voter registration levels were healthy across Staffordshire;
- CCDC's registration rate of 95% was amongst the highest in the County;
- There was a misconception that low turnout at elections directly equated to low registration rates.

A Member commented that it was incumbent on Councillors to be more proactive in encouraging a greater number of people to vote at a local level given that turnout was around 20% for District/County elections and above 60%/70% for national elections and referenda.

The Chairman noted the low national registration rate of 18 to 25 year olds, and queried what the Council was doing to tackle this locally. The Democratic Services & Resilience Manager advised that due to existing workloads and limited resource and Officer capacity it was difficult to focus on such specific matters, but the Council followed the Electoral Commission's guidance and linked into their national campaign for promoting voter registration.

Members then raised comments about access/location issues with certain polling stations in the District. The Democratic & Resilience Services Manager noted that when such concerns were raised these were taken account where possible when preparing for elections. Any comments would also be taken into account for the required statutory review which could take place from October 2018 onwards, but would most likely commence in March 2019.

The meeting closed at 5:15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN