

Cannock Chase Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the
Cabinet

Held on Wednesday 12 June 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

In the Ballroom, Civic Centre, Cannock

Part 1

Present:

Councillors:

Johnson, T.	Leader of the Council
Newbury, J.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Regeneration & High Streets Portfolio Leader
Williams, D.	Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Thornley, S.J.	Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.	Parks, Culture, and Heritage Portfolio Leader
Prestwood, J.	Resources and Transformation Portfolio Leader

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor L. Wilson, Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader.

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

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

3. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2024 be approved.

4. Updates from Portfolio Leaders

(ii) Environment & Climate Change

The Leader of the Council updated in respect of the following on behalf of the Portfolio Leader:

- **Gambling Policy Consultation**

The Council's Gambling Policy was out for consultation. It began at the end of May and was due to close on 30 June. All relevant parties had been made aware.

The main objectives of the policy were:

- Prevent gambling becoming the cause of crime or disorder, being associated with crime, or supporting it.
- Ensuring gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
- Protecting children and other vulnerable people from being exploited.

Any individual or group interested were encouraged to be involved in the consultation and the links to the policy were on the Council's website.

- **Amendments to Licensing Policy**

Minor amendments had been made to the Council's Licensing Policy using the power delegated to the portfolio leader and in consultation with relevant senior officers.

One amendment brought the policy into line with the latest government legislation on the rehabilitation of offenders and other was to correct a minor error in the wording.

- **Appointment of Shared Services Managers**

Paul Beckley had been appointed as Building Control & Climate Change Manager and David Prosser-Davies as the Environmental Health Manager. Both posts would serve Cannock Chase and Stafford Borough Councils.

5. **Forward Plan**

Resolved:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period June to August 2024 (Item 5.1 - 5.2) be noted.

6. **Recommendations from Scrutiny Committee**

Consideration was given to the below recommendations referred from the Health, Wellbeing and The Community Scrutiny Committee held on 18 March 2024:

Recommendations from the Lettable Standards (Empty Properties) and Housing Affordability Working Group:

"That:

- (A) Cabinet approve the 'revised offer' of the letting standard as outlined within the report.
- (B) The revised offer made is to allocate a decoration pack to properties where no additional decorative works are required to be carried out by Housing Maintenance."

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The 'revised offer' of the letting standard as outlined within the report considered at the 18 March 2024 Health, Wellbeing, and The Community Scrutiny Committee be agreed.
- (B) The revised offer made to allocate a decoration pack to properties where no additional decorative works were required to be carried out by Housing Maintenance, be noted.

7. Motions Referred from 17 April 2024 Council Meeting

Consideration was given to the Motions referred from the full Council meeting held on 17 April 2024 in respect of 'Bleed Kits' (Item 7.1) and 'Supporting our Armed Forces Community' (Item 7.2 - 7.5).

(i) Bleed Kits Motion

The Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader advised the following:

- Work was still ongoing regarding this motion, which was presented by the Leader of the Opposition in April 2024.
- Three bleed kits had been installed in Heath Hayes, Wimblebury, and Hawks Green.
- Initial discussions with Burntwood First Responders suggested that bleed kits would be located with defibrillators already installed within the District, funded by a private company. This suggested that whoever took responsibility at each location for the defibrillators would also take on the maintenance of the bleed kit.
- The Council would also need to ensure that those locations and organisations were happy to maintain the bleed kits going forward. However, the Council was awaiting a formal response to confirm this.
- Once sufficiently updated, the outcome would be reported back accordingly to the full Council and the proposer of the motion.

Resolved:

That the update as provided by the Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader be noted and accepted.

(ii) Supporting Our Armed Forces Community Motion

The Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader acknowledged and paid tribute to the valiant heroes of D-Day, whose anniversary was commemorated last week, noting their courage and sacrifice continued to inspire us all.

The Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader then advised the following in respect of the motion:

- Work was ongoing to implement this large motion. Initial discussions had taken place between the Portfolio Leader (proposer of the motion) and the leadership team regarding the financial and workforce implications of the motion. However, more information was required and therefore, the Portfolio Leader was arranging meetings with the West Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (WM RFCA) and would be attending the WM RFCA annual general meeting.
- The Portfolio Leader had also begun to have informal meetings with external stakeholders in the community to build relations going forward regarding the working group.
- The Portfolio Leader was proud that the 'D-Day' flag was flown last week at the Civic Centre and the 'Armed Forces Week' flag would be flown during Armed Forces Week (Monday 24 to Sunday 30 June).
- In conclusion, work was ongoing to improve how we supported our Armed Forces Community at the Council and further updates would be provided where relevant.

Resolved:

That the update as provided by the Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader be noted and accepted.

8. Value for Money Progress Report 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Transformation and Assurance (Item 8.1 - 8.25).

Resolved:

That the progress at the end of the 2023-24 in the delivery of the Value for Money Improvement Plan set out at Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

Reason for Decision:

The information allowed Cabinet to ensure that all appropriate steps were being taken to address the findings of the External Auditors and improve the Council's governance arrangements.

9. End of Year Performance Report 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 9.1 - 9.40).

Resolved:

That the progress at the end of the fourth quarter relating to the delivery of the Council's priorities as detailed at Appendices 1a-1d and the performance information set out at Appendix 2 of the report, be noted.

Reason for Decision:

The performance information allowed Cabinet to monitor progress in delivery of the Council's corporate priorities and operational services.

10. Strategic Risk Register

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Transformation & Assurance (Item 10.1 - 10.12).

Resolved:

That the Strategic Risk Register and the progress made in the identification and management of the strategic risks, be approved.

Reason for Decision:

Cabinet was required to approve the Strategic Risk Register.

11. Appointment of Representatives to Serve on Outside Bodies

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive (Item 11.1 - 11.5).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The appointment of Cabinet representatives to outside bodies for 2024-25, be approved (a copy of the agreed appointments was included as an Annex to these Minutes).
- (B) The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make appointments to additional outside bodies and amendments to any existing outside bodies, as necessary, throughout the municipal year, which would otherwise be determined by Cabinet.

Reasons for Decisions:

To reflect the wishes of the Cabinet as to which Members it wished to appoint to those outside bodies as listed in Appendix 1 of the report.

For practical purposes, Cabinet was also requested to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make appointments to any additional outside bodies, and amend existing appointments.

12. Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and Self-Assessment

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets (Item 12.1 - 12.43).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The implications of the new Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, be noted.
- (B) The Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and the outcomes from the self-assessment form, further to its subsequent publication on the Council's website, be approved.

Reasons for Decisions:

To adhere to membership requirements of the Housing Ombudsman and its Complaint Handling Code 2024 for Landlords to produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge by Cabinet, which must include the annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure complaint handling policy remained in line with the Ombudsman's requirements.

13. Decarbonisation of Housing Stock Properties

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Housing and Corporate Assets (Item 13.1 - 13.5).

Resolved:

- (A) That £818,097 of Cannock Chase District Council funding be allocated to match the West Midlands Combined Authority allocation of £818,097 to carry out and manage decarbonisation measures to dwellings managed by the Housing Revenue Account.
- (B) A grant funding agreement be entered into with the West Midlands Combined Authority consortium for the purpose of delivery of the work and to accept the allocation of £818,097 funding from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

- (C) That the use of the West Midlands Combined Authority to carry out property assessments, co-ordination and design to provide a 'medium term plan' for each property in line with 'Publicly Available Specification 2035 British Standard' for retrofitting dwellings, be approved.
- (D) The Head of Housing and Corporate Assets be granted delegated authority to finalise the project, Energy Efficiency Measures and complimentary works with the West Midlands Combined Authority and to deliver the project through to completion.

Reasons for Decisions:

The identified properties for this project required energy efficiency measures to be undertaken. Approval of this funding would allow the Council to stretch its budget by £818,097, doubling the number of units receiving work that could be funded through the Council's capital budget alone.

All properties identified for this project would require 'energy efficiency measures' to be undertaken to meet regulatory requirements. The current approved budget, report dated 1 February 2023, allowed for some capital spend on energy efficiency measures but not to the extent of the match required for the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) funding allocation. There was however a contingency sum over the three-year budget period of £2.5m, which could be used for identified works arising from the Stock Condition Survey and for works to stock to meet regulatory requirements.

Approving some spend from the contingency sum would provide a match to the WMCA funding and enable more properties to immediately be improved with measures such as loft insulation top up and the installation of photovoltaic solar panels. Delivery of such measures will provide the following benefits:

- A reduction in carbon emissions from the stock.
- Improving energy efficiency will enhance the quality of life for residents, leading to healthier and more comfortable living environments.
- Improvement to living conditions, reducing fuel cost and fuel poverty for the most vulnerable and those facing financial difficulties.
- Investment in energy efficient technology measures.
- Economic benefits creating local job opportunities and improving the skills of the workforce.
- Detailed retrofit assessments would support in the development of the asset management plans, providing data on the energy efficiency to allow for planning of maintenance, repairs, replacements and upgrades to inform the 30-year business plan.
- Reduction in reliance on the national grid.

14. Increased Fixed Penalty Amounts for Environmental Offences

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Regulatory Services (Item 14.1 - 14.6).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) The proposed new fixed penalty amounts detailed at report Appendix 1, including the early payment provisions, and the penalty amounts set at the maximum levels introduced by the 2023 Regulations, be adopted.
- (B) The increase in revenue from such penalties continued to be ring fenced and used to support environmental projects to prevent future offences.
- (C) The Head of Regulatory Services be authorised to extend the current £250 cash reward (offered to residents whose reports of fly tipping lead to successful prosecutions or offenders' payments of fixed penalty notices) to all enviro-crime offences, with rewards proportionate to the maximum penalty for each.

Reasons for Decisions:

The aim was to create a greater deterrent to committing environmental offences within Cannock Chase District; to ensure the punishment was proportionate to the offence, and to demonstrate the Council's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach towards environmental crime.

Environmental crimes like littering and fly-tipping harm wildlife and nature, created eyesores and spoiled our citizens' and visitors' enjoyment of our public places and green spaces. It was hoped these new upper penalty limits would deter people from harming such spaces in the first instance and ensure that those who chose to offend faced tougher consequences. The proposals sought to strike a balance between deterring repeat offending and ensuring that penalties were proportionate and affordable. This approach recognised the costs associated with the Council having to pursue legal proceedings.

15. Staffordshire Leaders Board - Terms of Reference

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive (Item 15.1 - 15.14).

Resolved:

That the updated Terms of Reference of the Leaders Board attached as Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

The County, City and Staffordshire's eight District and Borough Councils have worked together over a number of years in many ways to benefit residents. This includes our collective response to the pandemic, supporting businesses and the economy, creating jobs and opportunities, delivering nationally important housing employment sites (examples include the Commonwealth Games, South Staffordshire College and Rugeley Power Station), working to reduce waste and increase recycling, tackling climate change, and by reimagining and reshaping the future of Cannock Town Centre.

The Leaders Board was created to build on this collaboration by recognising that a formal joint committee would be able to speak to central Government for the area and our communities. It also provides the foundation for exploring the potential of a deal with government, when the right time comes to do so, for the devolution of powers and funding to the area.

Although Stoke on Trent were not one of the original members of the Leaders Board it was always hoped that they could be brought on board at some point, and agreement has now been reached to enable this to happen. This will however, require a number of amendments to be made to the Terms of Reference of the Board, and these amendments need to be considered and agreed by all parties, hence this report.

16. Cannock Town Centre - Levelling Up Fund

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Economic Development and Planning (Item 16.1 - 16.20).

Resolved:

That:

- (A) Progress made on delivery of the project, be noted.
- (B) The project scope for the second phase of town centre regeneration as set out in report paragraph 5.7 below and the confidential appendix 2 be agreed.
- (C) Subject to approval of the Project Adjustment Request (including a request for an extension of time) from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, permission to spend up to £8,750,000 from the capital programme allocation in respect of those works identified in report paragraph 5.23, be approved.
- (D) A surrender of head leasehold interests and acquisition of a freehold interest in commercial properties in Cannock town centre, as set out in the confidential appendix 2 of the report be accepted, to facilitate the delivery of phase 2 of the town centre regeneration scheme, subject to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities approving the Project Adjustment Request (including a request for extension of time) and VAT advice.
- (E) The withdrawal of the Compulsory Purchase Order for Cannock Town Centre, be endorsed and noted.
- (F) 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 and the Portfolio Leader for Regeneration & High Streets to finalise all matters related to the surrender of the head leaseholds and vacant possession process, subject to approval from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of the Project Adjustment Request which included a request for an extension of time.
- (G) 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, the Portfolio Leader for Regeneration & High Streets and the Levelling Up Fund Programme Board to take all steps to implement phase 2 of the programme within the agreed scope and budget.
- (H) It be noted that as a result of decision (G), above, there would be no available capacity or capital to deliver other projects across the District.
- (I) Based on the information contained in report paragraph 5.13 and as a result of decision (C), above, approval be given to proceeding with a competitive developer procurement process for the appointment of a preferred developer to deliver re-development opportunities for Cannock town centre, the detail of which would be subject to a future report to Cabinet.

Reasons for Decisions:

A significant amount of work had been completed to inform the detail of the second phase of Cannock town centre Levelling Up Fund project. Detailed costings and design work had illustrated which elements of the original scheme were deliverable within the Levelling Up Fund funding timescales.

Colleagues from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had confirmed that planning and subsequent implementation of phase 2 of the Cannock Town Centre Regeneration programme should be progressed at pace.

The commercial transactions referred to in report paragraph 2.4 would enable the Council to secure vacant possession ahead of proposed demolition works. Due to the Council negotiating agreements with the relevant landowners, the Council no longer needed to pursue a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) through to public inquiry.

The meeting closed at 7:02 p.m.

Leader

Cannock Chase Council
Cabinet Appointed Representatives to Outside Bodies for 2024-25

Notes:

- All the below listed positions are appointed on an annual basis at the first Cabinet meeting after Annual Council.
- All bodies have one seat available unless otherwise stated.

Name of Body	Appointed Representatives
Cannock Chase National Landscape Joint Management Committee	Parks, Culture, and Heritage Portfolio Leader Substitute: Cllr. M. Freeman
Local Government Association General Assembly	Leader of the Council Substitute: Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Local Strategic Partnership (Chase Community Partnership) 5 seats to be filled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council • Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader • Housing and Corporate Assets Portfolio Leader • Parks, Culture & Heritage Portfolio Leader • Leader of the Opposition
Norton Canes Community Partnership	Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
PATROL (Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London) Joint Committee	Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Poplars Landfill Site Liaison Committee	Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership	Regeneration and High Streets Portfolio Leader (or Head of Economic Development & Planning as nominee)
Staffordshire Police, Fire, and Crime Panel	Community Wellbeing Portfolio Leader Substitute: Leader of the Council
Staffordshire Sustainability Board (Formerly the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Management Board)	Environment & Climate Change Portfolio Leader Substitute: Cllr. M. Dunnett
Staffordshire Playing Fields Association	Parks, Culture & Heritage Portfolio Leader
West Midlands Employers	Leader of the Council