

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**CABINET**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 4:00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors:

Adamson, G.	Leader of the Council
Alcott, G.	Deputy Leader of the Council and Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Kraujalis, J.T.	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Bennett, C.	Crime and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Mitchell, Mrs. C.	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Preece, J.P.T.L.	Environment Portfolio Leader
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Pearson, A.R.	Housing Portfolio Leader
Todd, Mrs. D.M.	Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader

**59. Apologies**

None.

**60. 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.

**61. Updates from Portfolio Leaders**

**Leader of the Council**

Centenary Remembrance Day Services and Celebrations

The Leader reminded Members that there were a variety of Remembrance Day Parades, Services and events taking place across the District on Sunday, 11 November, marking 100 years since the end of the First World War.

**Culture and Sport**

Chase Leisure Centre Improvements

The Portfolio Leader advised Members that refurbishment and improvement works had begun at the Chase Leisure Centre. While Inspiring Healthy

Lifestyles would seek to keep disruption to a minimum; inevitably, there would be some impact on users.

## **Crime and Partnerships**

### Police Pension Fund

The Portfolio Leader advised that he had been keeping a watching brief on matters in relation to the Police Pension Fund. While this would not directly impact on the Council or its services, it was recognised that it might impact on Council Tax payers through the Police and Fire precept element of Council Tax.

## **Economic Development and Planning**

### Invitation to Attend Briefing on Future of Rugeley Power Station Site

The Portfolio Leader encouraged as many Members as possible to go along to the briefing on Monday 12 November, to which, currently, only, the relevant Ward Members from Cannock Chase Council and Lichfield District Council had been invited. The purpose of the briefing was to update Members on the demolition of the Power Station and future proposals for the site.

## **62. Minutes of Cabinet Meeting of 4 October, 2018**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 October, 2018, be approved as a correct record and signed.

## **63. Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan of Decisions for the period November 2018 to January 2019 (Item 5.1 – 5.3 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Decisions for the period November 2018 to January 2019 be noted.

## **64. Financial Plan 2018-19 to 2021-22**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Deputy Managing Director (Item 6.1 – 6.20 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) It be noted no specific details exist in relation to the levels of funding the Council will receive from the Government with effect from 2020-21. The Financing element of the Financial Plan therefore represented this authority's interpretation of how funding regimes, yet to be finalised, will impact on existing forecasts, as compared to actual indicative funding levels provided by the Government.
- (B) Subject to decision (A):
  - (i) The Financial Plan 2018-19 to 2021-22 and the various scenarios that exist in relation to individual funding streams be noted.
  - (ii) The forecast outturn for 2018-19 be approved.

- (iii) The draft Capital Programme 2018-19 to 2021-22 be noted.
  - (iv) The General Fund working balance be set at a minimum of £1.0 million.
  - (v) The principles set out in the Council's Financial Plan and Budget Strategy be adopted in finalising the preparation of the 2019-20 budget.
- (C) The Financial Plan be updated as further details of the Government's proposed changes to its funding become available during the budget process.

### Reasons for Decisions

The report set out the Council's forecast financial position for the next three years, incorporating anticipated spending pressures and savings already identified. Financial resources available to the Council over the three-year period were also set out. The Financial Plan reflected the Government's current Funding Regime as adjusted for proposals currently being considered in the design of the new Regime.

A great deal of uncertainty existed in relation to the future funding of local government. A 75% Business Rates Retention Scheme was planned for implementation in 2020-21, with the funding baseline determined by a 'Fair Funding Review' currently being determined. No specific details existed in relation to these changes and proposed settlements for the Council were not likely to be known until the autumn of 2019. In addition, the Government was proposing further changes to the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme and this remained a material risk in relation to the financial sustainability and resilience of the Council with the current financial plan being underpinned by £0.8 million per annum of such resources.

The Technical Consultation on the 2019-20 Local Government Settlement provided further assurances in relation to the forthcoming financial year. However, the NHB scheme was likely to see a change in the 'deadweight' allowance that would directly impact on 2019-20.

Potential scenarios in changes in funding had been developed to enable a Budget Strategy to be put in place. The Strategy was based upon an interpretation of the "issues" being evaluated as part of the design stage of the new regime. An interpretation of potential changes, adopting a middle-ground stance, was likely to result in:

- Deterioration of Business Rates following the reset of £0.7 million in 2020/21;
- A compensating increase in Business Rates from growth related to Mill Green;
- An ongoing reduction in NHB of £0.157 million in 2021-22. However, due to the material amounts involved in best/worst case scenarios, it was essential that prudent approach be adopted until further details became available.

In addition to the above, the revised opening of Mill Green from the spring to autumn 2020 would have a detrimental impact in 2020-21, but could be offset by a transfer from Working Balances.

The overall financial position was summarised in report paragraph 3.6.

The revised Financial Plan therefore provided the framework for the preparation of detailed budgets. Its principles and those detailed in the approved Budget Strategy, subject to approval, would be used to prepare both the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for consideration by Cabinet in February 2019.

No material changes to the Budget Strategy arose with the impact of the shortfall in 2020-21 being pre-empted by the increase in Working Balances over recent years. The ongoing shortfall in 2021-22 was considered to be manageable within the existing strategy.

Key elements of the delivery of service budgets would be the maintenance of existing levels of service provision and, the implementation of actions as contained in the Corporate Plan. Due regard was also being taken to the emerging changes to services of partner organisations within Staffordshire.

A Staffordshire-wide Business Rates Pilot application had again been submitted. The application related to 2019-20 and the outcome was likely to be known in late November/early December of this year. No account had been made in the Financial Plan in relation to the financial impact of a successful application.

#### **65. Strategic Risk Register**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 7.1 – 7.18 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Strategic Risk Register be approved.
- (B) The progress made in the identification and management of the strategic risks be noted.

#### Reason for Decisions

All strategic risks and associated action plans had been reviewed and the Council's risk profile was summarised in the table at report paragraph 3.1

#### **66. Local Plan Review Issues and Scope Consultation – Feedback and Next Steps**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 8.1 – 8.22 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the following be noted:

- The feedback on the Cannock Chase Local Plan Review Issues and Scope consultation and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report;
- The summary of the different consultation methods utilised as set out in Appendix A of the report;
- The next steps for taking forward the next stage of Local Plan preparation, including potential resource implications for the evidence base;
- The key changes arising from the new National Planning Policy Framework

as set out in the report;

- The implications for the plan process moving forward, including resourcing matters.

### Reasons for Decision

The report provided feedback on the recent consultation on the first iteration of the new Local Plan for Cannock Chase District, which was produced following the decision to cease work on Local Plan Part 2 (Council, February 2018) and proceed with a review of the Local Plan as a whole given the amount of change in the planning system. The initial consultation related to an Issues and Scoping paper, and views were sought on the issues that the new Local Plan should address. Accompanying this, responses were also sought on the scoping report for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which had to be produced as a legal requirement to help shape the plan as it evolved.

The Issues and Scope consultation document was deliberately high level and broad to ensure that a wide range of matters could be considered before detail of the new plan was formulated. It also enabled those people who responded to the previous Local Plan (Part 2) consultation to see how their responses had been utilised as the new process began.

Consultation took place for an eight-week period beginning on 2 July 2018. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), only required a six-week consultation period, however it was felt appropriate to extend this to eight weeks given that this was over the summer holiday period. Furthermore, the Council was legally only required to consult with three statutory consultees (Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency) regarding the SA scoping report. However, it was felt it would be prudent to publicly consult on this at the same time.

During the consultation period the Government launched the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which made a number of significant changes to the planning system and hence changed the context within which the Local Plan would need to be produced. The Local Plan consultation was able to pre-empt much of this change based on drafts previously produced by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), as set out in the related 14 June 2018 Cabinet report. A short update had however been provided in this report.

Furthermore, under the Duty to Co-operate, the fourteen local authorities in the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) were working together to address a significant housing shortfall and work was ongoing in relation to this.

### **67. Cannock Chase Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Financial Year Report and CIL Guidance for Parish and Town Councils**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 9.1 – 9.19 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Community Infrastructure Levy financial year report be noted.

- (B) The allocation of 5% of Community Infrastructure Levy funds received annually to administrative expenses be approved.
- (C) The publication of the 'Community Infrastructure Levy Guidance for Parish and Town Councils' be approved and that any minor updates required in the future (to reflect regulatory changes) be delegated to the Head of Economic Prosperity.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The Council approved the CIL Charging Schedule and the Regulation 123 List of infrastructure projects eligible to receive funding at its meeting on 14 April, 2015. CIL came into effect in relation to relevant chargeable development on 1 June, 2015.

CIL was intended to provide a funding stream for infrastructure needed to support the policies and proposals in the adopted Local Plan. It would partly replace funding previously obtained via Planning Obligations (S106 agreements and Unilateral Undertakings), which had become more limited in scope in relation to pooling of funds from five or more obligations as a result of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the CIL Regulations).

The Council was legally required to produce a financial year report on CIL receipts and spend, in accordance with the CIL Regulations. This was the third financial report since the adoption of CIL and provided a summary of CIL receipts and expenditure for the 2017-18 financial year.

The CIL Regulations allowed CIL charging authorities to utilise up to 5% of their CIL receipts for administrative purposes. The report sought approval for this maximum 5% to be allocated each year in order to provide certainty of funding for CIL related administration.

The CIL Regulations required the Council to pass a proportion of CIL receipts received from developments within parish and town council areas to those relevant councils. As the rate of such transfers was increasing, it was considered appropriate to provide specific and publicly available guidance on the receipt, spending and monitoring of CIL monies.

#### **68. Approval to Spend S106 Monies on Commission of an Open Space Assessment and Strategy**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 10.1 – 10.6 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) S106 monies be allocated into the Council's budget to facilitate the commissioning of the Open Space Assessment and Strategy.
- (B) Expenditure of S106 monies held by the Council be authorised for the purpose of 'provision of and/or improvement of existing public open space, sport and recreation in the District' (S106 code Q229) on this work.

#### Reasons for Decisions

Improvements to the network of open spaces across the District need to be

informed by robust and up-to-date information consisting of the assessment of different types of open space, how well they were performing in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, with a clear strategy for targeting investment not only in Council-owned spaces but in the wider network of provision. Access to a variety of good quality open spaces (including more formal parks and play areas, and other less formal types of open space, such as amenity greenspace and corridors, allotments, churchyards and cemeteries, canals, walkways and cycle-ways) contribute to improving peoples' sense of health and wellbeing, as well as ensuring that the District was an attractive place in which to live, work and invest.

Furthermore, the Council was in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, setting out a planning framework for the District looking forward over the next fifteen years. It would determine how much, and what kind of development was needed for the District, and where it should go. The Plan would include policy focussed on the delivery of infrastructure related to health and wellbeing, such as parks, recreation facilities and open spaces, as well as safeguarding a network of green spaces that enhance the built-up areas of the District and improve the community's accessibility to good quality open space.

An up-to-date evidence base was necessary to inform both the work of the Parks and Open Spaces service and as an essential piece of evidence to inform the emerging Local Plan. Work had already commenced on an Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities Assessment and Strategy. It was proposed to complement this work by commissioning work on remaining types of open space with a new Open Space Assessment and Strategy.

The most recent evidence was produced in 2009 and was a partial update to a 2005 study. Clearly, this was no longer fit for purpose, either in terms of informing future investment decisions of the Council, or in terms of being robust evidence for a Local Plan, for which evidence should be less than five years old at the time of examination. The intention of the Assessment therefore was to update the Council's existing evidence base on open space needs and provision, and to guide the development of strategy to deliver on the Council's aspirations and opportunities for a high quality network of open spaces across the District.

The provision of high quality parks and other open spaces was essential to achieving much of the Council's crosscutting agenda including crime reduction, healthy communities and natural resource management as they deliver a range of social, economic and environmental benefits. The Assessment would inform the preparation of planning policies (including local standards for quantity, quality and accessibility, and developer contributions), site allocations and area designations within the new Local Plan. It would provide a strategic direction for the management and improvement of parks and open spaces and the development/enhancement of existing/new space.

As a result of the Council's existing policy of requiring S106 developer contributions in conjunction with development, funds amounting to £45,507 for the purpose of 'provision of and/or improvement of existing public open space, sport and recreation in the District' were currently held in the Council's reserves. It was therefore proposed to expend these funds on the preparation of a new Open Space Assessment and Strategy, in order to provide up-to-date evidence to ensure that improvements were achieved in the most appropriate manner.

## 69. Cannock Town Centre Management Partnership

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 11.1 – 11.22 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The facilitation of a new Unincorporated Association be authorised, initially as a separate partnership entity in order to handle all affairs of the Cannock Town Centre Partnership and its members. The name of the Unincorporated Association to be determined by the Cannock Town Centre Partnership when establishing governance and appropriate representation as detailed in report section 5.5 at its inaugural meeting scheduled to take place in November 2018. The Unincorporated Association would need to decide its future structure.
- (B) The Head of Economic Prosperity be authorised, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Head of Finance to setup and enter into all necessary agreements, in order for the Cannock Town Centre Partnership to be established and operated appropriately.
- (C) The Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader be the Council's sole nominated representative to sit on the Cannock Town Centre Partnership Board once formally established and operating.
- (D) Existing Council staff time and financial S106 monies be used where appropriate and applicable (held by the Council) to operate, and support the operation and activities of the Cannock Town Centre Partnership. This support would be necessary until such time (circa two years) as the Unincorporated Association was properly established, working effectively and the Partnership became financially sustainable in its own right. The Unincorporated Association company structure may also need to be reviewed in light of the sustainability strategy.

### Reasons for Decisions

Research had been carried out by the newly appointed Town Centre Partnership Officer (TCPO) on a variety of Town Centre Partnerships (TCPs) operating across the country. This research included considering best practice advice from the Association of Town Centre Managers and the Government guide for Town Centre Managers. Informal consultation was also carried out with the Council's contracted business start up adviser "Blue Orchid", was undertaken. This advice helped to recommend the best governance and management arrangements for operating the new TCP.

It was recommended that the most suitable operating model for the proposed new Cannock TCP (CTCP) was to operate as a Unincorporated Association (UA). Guidelines for management of a TCP reinforced the importance of appropriate governance arrangements being in place from the outset of forming a TCP. This was useful for independence, transparency and accountability of activities carried out by the TCP.

The UA recommended for the CTCP would operate as an informal partnership but must have a constitution in place to aid management and governance arrangements. A draft constitution was provided at Appendix 3 of the report.

The CTCP would be an agreement between a group of individuals who come together for a reason other than to make a profit. An informal structure helped share responsibilities amongst its members, but ultimately, the Council would remain the legal body accountable for the CTCP.

The UA and constitution needed to be shaped and adopted by the TCP and both were capable of adaption if the Partnership decided these arrangements were not what they wished to operate under. As part of any adopted constitution, the formation of a Partnership Board was essential to a TCP with ideally separate financial accounting arrangements in place for the management of the affairs of the CTCP and the UA.

The CTCP may choose to change its legal structure to be 'Incorporated' in the fullness of time (when Directors were in place) to allow full independence from the Council for its operation, and to directly receive grant funding from third parties as opposed to via the Council.

Good practice recommended the creation of separate accounts for financial affairs of a TCP. This was to enable any income from events, sponsorship and donations to be properly accounted for and would aid transparency. The Council, along with the TCPO, would manage the budget on a day-to-day basis and Finance would need to provide quarterly accounts and end-of-year statements.

Cabinet, in February 2012, approved the development of a protocol and process for use and expenditure of S106 monies in town centres, held by the Council. It was anticipated that once formed, the CTCP would be utilising these funds to support activities of the new partnership. The current S106 balance immediately accessible for supporting Cannock town centre activities was £16,285. Further S106 funding was payable by the developers of the McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Cannock (MGDO) in two instalments, i.e. £50,000 twelve months from the commencement of development, and a further payment of £50,000 twelve months later. Cabinet, in January 2018, approved permission to spend for S106 monies linked to the planning obligations of the MGDO.

The CTCP would need to apply for use of S106 funds via the approved protocol and application process agreed by Cabinet in February 2012. This process safeguarded use of the monies, and the Council could check compliance in accordance with the original intended purposes as defined in the S106 agreement.

Transition from the existing Cannock Traders' Association (CTA) arrangement to the new CTCP would be essential to avoid confusion of branding and to stimulate enthusiasm, participation and involvement with more traders in the town centre. The CTA's role had diminished over time and currently operated with just two members. Transition would include cessation of any further financial payments to the CTA, anticipated from January 2019. The Council had previously funded public liability insurance, first-aid coverage at events and one-off modest financial contributions to support events taking place in the town centre (excluding Christmas lights, which the Council took the decision in December 2016 to no longer support).

The CTCP must be established as soon as practicable given construction of the MGDO had now commenced on site. The Council aspired to encourage linked trips by visitors to the MGDO into the town centre. A shuttle bus would operate to give a physical connection to the two destinations, along with joint promotional

activities for the two destinations in the future. MGDO was due to open in 2020.

Consultations with stakeholders, including businesses in Cannock town centre, demonstrated support for setting up the new CTCP. The timing and appetite for underpinning the identity and role of Cannock town centre remained a key priority of the Council.

Facilitating sustainability of the CTCP was going to be critical in the long-term. Therefore, option for the future may need to consider the introduction of an annual subscription fee to be a CTCP member (fees linked to the size and type of business). However, before considering such a response, the CTCP must establish a proven track record of delivery. The success of the CTCP would determine how likely members were to pay a subscription charge for being part of the Partnership in the future. There was a need to give further consideration to other income generating activities that may include exploring a Business Improvement District (BID) for Cannock town centre.

The TCPO role was a Council appointed post, funded on a two-year, fixed-term basis. Reporting responsibility and supervision was through the Council's Economic Development Manager. It was recognised that the TCPO would directly be resourcing delivery of activities of the new CTCP in a supportive manner.

The CTCP would bring together businesses, traders and potentially the MGDO to build a thriving community that attracted visitors to the town centre. Some challenging personalities were active in the town centre and managing these individuals, their interests and creating an inclusive and transparent basis of working would be very important to gaining the support of all in the new CTCP.

#### **70. Housing Services Annual Report 2017/18**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 12.1 – 12.16).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The draft 2017-18 Housing Services Annual Report be agreed for circulation to all the Council's tenants.
- (B) If required, the Head of Housing and Partnerships, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, be authorised to make amendments to the draft 2017-18 Housing Services Annual Report prior to circulation.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The Council was required to publish the 2017-18 Annual Housing Report as set out in the Regulatory Standards by Homes England.

The Annual Report must be circulated to all tenants and this would be achieved as part of the autumn edition of 'Hometalk'.

#### **71. Housing Green Paper – 'A New Deal for Social Housing'**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 13.1 – 13.38 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The proposals and implication of the Housing Green Paper 'A new deal for social housing', be noted.
- (B) The response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's consultation questions regarding the Housing Green Paper, 'A New Deal for Social Housing', as set out in Appendix 2 of the report and agreed by the Housing Portfolio Leader, be noted and endorsed.
- (C) As the Council needed to submit its consultation paper by 6 November 2018, call-in procedures in relation to decision (B), above, shall not apply.
- (D) If required, the Head of Housing and Partnerships, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, be granted retrospective authorisation to make amendments to the consultation document prior to its submission on 6 November, 2018.

#### Reasons for Decisions

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published a Housing Green Paper that proposed 'a rebalancing of the relationship between residents and landlords'. The consultation was open to everyone to gather evidence and sought views on the proposals contained within the document.

A response to the consultation questions was submitted to the MHCLG following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Leader, and was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. Views on the consultation paper needed to be received by 6 November, 2018, and as a result, it was proposed that call-in procedures in relation to this should not apply.

#### **72. Participation in an OFGEM Approved 'Sandbox' Trial to Optimise the Usage of Existing Solar PV Energy Installations**

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Partnerships (Item 14.1 – 14.7 + Not for Publication Appendix 2 (Item 14.8) of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Approval for participation in the trial be granted.
- (B) The Head of Housing and Partnerships be authorised to agree on the conditions of the trial with Green Energy Networks Ltd. and Chase Community Solar.
- (C) The list of properties to be included in the trial would be restricted to Council owned properties agreed by the Head of Housing and Partnerships, and would be determined on the basis of their suitability for inclusion in the project.

### Reasons for Decisions

The project would assist with the development of new energy efficient technology to help reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Information was provided on how energy generated from Solar Photo Voltaic (PV) Panels could be more efficiently utilised and education would be provided to the Cannock Chase Council tenants on how to more efficiently use their Solar PV installation.

This was a community project and if successful had the potential to reduce fuel poverty on a wider scale.

The properties identified to participate in this trial were referenced in the Not for Publication Appendix 2 of the report.

### **73. Exclusion of the Public**

RESOLVED:

That the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**CABINET**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 4:00 P.M.**

**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 2**

**74. Cannock Chase Engineering Academy**

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Economic Prosperity (Item 16.1 –16.35 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) Approval and permission to spend a £500,000 capital allocation from the District Investment Fund in 2018/19 be given to allow for the purchase of state-of-the-art engineering equipment in the new Cannock Chase Engineering Academy. These monies were for capital equipment purchases only for the proposed new Cannock Chase Engineering Academy as part of a larger project and investment taking place and were intended to complement other funding secured by South Staffordshire College as part of the Cannock Chase Skills and Innovation Hub. The monies would be issued to South Staffordshire College as a non-recoverable grant, however there would be a number of grant conditions as detailed in report paragraphs 5.12 and 5.13 to protect the Council's investment.
- (B) The Head of Economic Prosperity and Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Economic Development & Planning Portfolio Leader and the Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader, be authorised to work in partnership with South Staffordshire College to implement and carry out any said actions to be able to equip and established the proposed Cannock Chase Engineering Academy. This delegated authority would extend to setting up and entering into all necessary agreement to deliver the project.

Reasons for Decisions

The District Need Analysis 2018 identified that there was a need to increase higher-level skills in the District. This was an issue generally for the District, but also more specifically linked to potential future growth sectors (including the engineering sector). Cannock Chase was currently below the national average regarding residents' attainment of NVQ level 4 and above.

It was necessary to make investment now in order to better equip our residents with the skills needed to be able to secure higher-level (better-paid) skilled positions within the District. The Council taking direct action to aid local delivery

of higher-level skills provision meant individual residents would have the opportunity to increase their economic prospects and prosperity. Wage rates would be pushed upwards by making such an intervention and could even be helpful in retaining the small number of highly skilled people within the District itself, and reduce 'out-commuting'. Taking action to increase the supply of local skilled workers would increase the opportunity to attract high-value inward investment into the District or retain local companies that wished to grow.

It had long been recognised by local employers that there was a skills gap provision aligned to the engineering sector. The Council had an opportunity through the Cannock Chase Engineering Academy (CCEA) to invest directly in the skills supply chain. State-of-the-art facilities were currently very limited locally and emerging technologies needed to feature in any curriculum delivery to make the courses relevant and therefore beneficial for engineering companies to access.

In response to this local need, opportunities for attracting in further public sector funding had emerged, and the urgency for investing in skills had been prioritised more highly by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other key stakeholders. A successful bid for £500,000 was made by the Council and South Staffordshire College (SSC) to the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP (SSLEP). This was on the basis of match funding being made by the Council.

The total funding package, if all monies were secured as planned from partners, would see a capital project of £1.5 million. All monies would be invested in purchasing new state-of-the-art equipment for the CCEA. All grant agreements would be with SSC direct and the funder, and not through the Council. All revenue, including teaching/delivery costs were the responsibility of SSC, and not the Council. Any external funding awarded to the project would be granted to SSC as the accountable body for the project. Therefore, risks associated with non-performance and clawback rested with SSC and not the Council.

The £500,000 sought from the Council would be a one-off, non-refundable, capital contribution/investment. Reducing the level of Council investment would also reduce the skills being delivered. This would subsequently threaten the higher-level skills or the state-of-the-art technology that local engineering companies desperately need and want. The CCEA would only be able to deliver BTEC awards and certificate in Engineering at basic to advance levels. However, it would lack the necessary infrastructure to deliver BTEC Level Higher National Diplomas in Engineering at levels 4 and 5, or the Higher Level Apprenticeship in Advanced Manufacturing. It was of vital importance that the CCEA was not merely limited to basic engineering skills but allowed for higher qualification delivery models to meet local industry demands.

#### **75. Request for Flexible Retirement**

Consideration was given to the Not for Publication Report of the Head of Governance and Corporate Services (Item 17.1 – 17.3 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the payment of actuarial strain resulting from the flexible retirement of employee number 204114 be agreed.

### Reasons for Decision

A request for flexible retirement was received from an employee within Governance and Corporate Services to reduce their full-time working hours to 22.20 hours per week effective from 1 January, 2019.

It was considered that the loss of the remaining 14.8 hours per week could be absorbed within the service with no significant reduction in core service provision. As a result, and subject to Cabinet approval for the payment of the resultant actuarial strain, it was proposed that the request be granted.

The meeting closed at 4:40 p.m.

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LEADER