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Simon W. Baker B.Ed MBA MISPAL
Chief Executive

COUNCIL (SMDC) SUPPLEMENT AGENDA

Date: Thursday, 28 February 2019

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: The Council Chamber - Moorlands House, Stockwell Street, Leek

Please find below an additional report which was unavailable when the agenda was published.

PART 1

13. To answer questions asked under Procedure Rule No. 10, if any. **(Pages 3 - 6)**
(At least two clear days notice required, in writing, to the Proper Officer in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.3.)

SIMON BAKER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

28 February 2019

Council Questions

1. Question to the Leader of the Council received from Councillor Cawley:

“Does the Leader of the Council agree with the North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group ‘s preferred option- Option 6- which closes care beds at Leek Hospital as published in the CCG consultation document “ Have Your Say”?”

Response:

A verbal response will be provided during the meeting.

2. Question to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment received from Councillor Lockett:

“I would like to ask what measure’s the Council is doing on the epidemic we have in Leek on dog fouling.”

Response:

“There is no evidence that there an epidemic of dog fouling in Leek. We often find a peak in fouling in the darker nights between December and March but information from our Street Scene Team suggests that the levels of fouling are no worse than in previous years with some signs that this year’s figures will show an improvement.

All sweeping schedules have recently been reviewed and are fit for purpose. The Street Scene Team know the problem areas and they receive additional cleansing.

The Council provides bins in which dog owners can dispose of their waste. This is supported by appropriate signage.

The Council also employs an Environmental Crime Officer to carry out patrols in the area. In the last year the Council issued 56 Fixed Penalty Notices and issued a formal prosecution in respect of environmental crime in the district, including 3 FPNs specifically in relation to dog fouling.

It should be recognised that it is the responsibility of dog owners to pick up after their dog. Members of the public can help by reporting dog fouling to the Council and we will take swift action to remove any dog waste.”

3. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Property received from Councillor Lockett:

“Why are shop tenants able to put whatever they like on shop’s front’s when Derby Street is a Conservation Area. This Council should be more pro-active to remove unacceptable frontage that is not complying with planning regulations. Leek is unique with Listed Building’s and it been dedicated a Conservation Area and should be respected.”

Response:

“Some signage and shop front alterations can be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission or advertisement consent and therefore it is not possible for the Council to control all changes to signage and shop fronts. Other more substantial changes will require permission. Where the Council receives applications for new shop fronts or advertisements it considers carefully the impact on the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings in the context of its Local Plan policies, supplementary planning guidance and national policy. Applications affecting these heritage assets are also subject to consideration by the Council’s Conservation Liaison Panel which includes elected members and representatives of local amenity and heritage bodies. Officers will always negotiate with applicants to seek amendments and improvements to their schemes through the application process. However, the Council will not hesitate to refuse and robustly defend at Appeal applications for inappropriate developments in our town centres and I would draw attention to the recent refusal of inappropriate changes to the shop front of the Society bar in the Market Place, which is currently the subject of a planning appeal.

Where the Council receives reports of unauthorised advertisements or alterations to shop fronts they will be fully investigated by our Enforcement Officers in accordance with the Council’s Enforcement Plan. In the first instance officers will seek to remove or regularise unauthorised signage and works through negotiation and mutual agreement. I would draw Members attention to a recent case at the “Top Cut Barbers” and “Leek Mobiles” shops in Derby Street. Reports of an unauthorised shop front alteration and signage were received by our enforcement team on 15th February. Following an investigation and discussions with the owner and tenant, the panels added to the stall risers and pilasters of the barbers were removed on 26th February and placed within the shop window. In this location they form part of a window display which is exempt from planning control.

The owner of the building is intending to secure the removal of the panels from the stall risers and pilasters of the mobile phone shop shortly and officers are engaging with the shop owners and tenants over a more appropriate form of fascia signage which the Council could support.

A retrospective application has been received for alterations to “The Works” which is currently under consideration by Planning Officers and alterations to the shop front at “Bargain Booze” are currently being pursued by Enforcement Officers.

The Council are committed to being “open for business” and we encourage and welcome new businesses to our town centres but we are equally committed to preserving and enhancing the unique and special character and appearance of our town centres and conservation areas which help to make the Staffordshire Moorlands such a great place to live, visit, shop and invest.”

4. Question to the Leader of the Council received from Councillor Cawley:

“I wonder what protocols exist between SMDC and bailiffs used by the Council when bailiffs are used to collect Council Tax arrears or other debts from vulnerable people?”

Response:

A verbal response will be provided during the meeting.

5. Question to the Leader of the Council received from Councillor P. Wilkinson:

“The government has allocated £675 million to regenerate High Streets. This council has identified Cheadle as the Town in greatest need of investment. The bid will be worth up to £10 million but will have to be match funded. How will this bid be match funded?”

Response:

A verbal response will be provided during the meeting.

6. Question to the Leader of the Council received from Councillor Lockett:

“When and who voted for the Leader and Officers of SMDC to be offered the privilege of using the Chairman’s/Vice Chairman’s chauffeur driven vehicle.”

Response:

A verbal response will be provided during the meeting.

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