

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 18 MARCH 2019

PRESENT: Councillor A Banks (Chair)

Councillors B A Hughes, K J Jackson, M M Lovatt, L A Malyon,
T McNicol, T Riley and P Wood.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor P Roberts, M Bowen and D Ogden.

APOLOGIES: Councillors S Ellis and J T Jones.

134 **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

DECIDED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on the 21st January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

135 **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL.**

DECIDED: That the report of the Chairman of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel dated 28th January 2019 be noted.

136 **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS, IF ANY.**

Councillor Roberts was the substitute member for Councillor Ellis.

137 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

No declarations of interests were made.

138 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY.**

There were none.

139 **LEEK AND DISTRICT FOODBANK - PETER DAVIES PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR.**

At the request of a member of the Panel, Peter Davies – Project Co-ordinator, was in attendance at the meeting to advise members of the work carried out by the Foodbank in Leek.

Leek and District Foodbank was affiliated to the Trussel Trust, was a registered Charity, had 8 trustee members and 42 volunteers.

During the last accounting year, food had been provided for 626 adults and 329 children which equated to 4041 meals. Only dried or tinned food products were

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issued but the packing lists were prepared by nutritionists to provide as balance diet as possible in the circumstances.

Clients were referred by various agencies to the Foodbank and received a voucher according to their needs. The Foodbank aimed to issue a maximum of 3 vouchers in a 6 month period , but had been noticed that over the past 2 years need had risen and clients often needed 5 or 6 vouchers. By signposting clients, agencies and the Foodbank aided clients to move out of crisis and food handed out on demand was avoided. However, major difficulties arose when clients didn't have a link to a referral agency or were unable to contact a referral agency at the time of need. The Citizens Advice Bureau used to be key to this but the loss of accessibility had an impact and alternative solutions to this issue were being looked into. The Officer explained that the 3 main reasons for foodbanks being used were:-

- Changes to benefit system, or problems making a benefit claim
- Low pay
- Debt

Discussion took place around the reasons people used the Foodbank, the possibility of the Council being able to issue vouchers to clients and provide collection points for donations. It was felt that some people were reluctant to use the Foodbank service due to their pride and that the service wasn't as easily accessible to rural communities. The Officer advised that clients were made to feel as comfortable as possible when they visited the facility and that accessibility was an issue for some people. To assist with this the Foodbank had explored the possibility of emergency food boxes which could be stored at schools or churches.

DECIDED:

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) For arrangements to be made for Foodbank collection boxes to be located in the reception areas within the Council.

140 **LOCAL POLICING TEAM ANNUAL UPDATE - CHIEF INSPECTOR MARK THORLEY.**

The Panel received an annual operational update from Chief Inspector Mark Thorley.

The level of recorded crime this year compared to the last year to date had increased by 4% for the Moorlands and the figure for the Force had increased by 1%.

Since 2016 there had been consistent reductions in crime. This could not always be the case, as the new model of Policing introduced in the Force in June last year was still settling in and had presented some challenges for the Moorlands which were being addressed.

The Officer updated members on the following:-

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- All sexual offences continued to fall currently at -31% for Rape, other serious sexual offences -13% and other sexual offences -20% compared to force reductions of -3%, -5% and -10%.
- Theft from motor vehicles - this showed a further 3% reduction. Force reductions were -10%.
- Burglary residential - a reduction of 15%, 30 less offences. Force reductions were 14%.
- Theft of motor vehicles an increase of 21% (12 more crimes) this year.
- Burglary business and community - 21% increase which was 21 more crimes, against a force increase of 14%. This could be partly attributed to travelling offenders as well as local offenders which included a series of crime in Leek town centre.
- 1% reduction in Anti Social Behaviour.

It was reported that travelling criminals were a problem for the area and crimes were committed in many rural locations across several forces.

Plans remained in place to direct a speedy response to areas with the intention of locating offenders and a zero tolerance approach was taken to any offences committed, along with imminent charges and civil remedies to try and prevent known offenders travelling on to the Moorlands to offend in the future.

Visibility for the Team in the Moorlands was up 1.7% to 75%. Significant reductions to public space violence had been achieved in all three Moorlands towns.

Since June last year Staffordshire Police had moved to a new model of Policing which had previously been explained in detail to all Councillors, Chief Executives and key stake holders.

All response Policing in the North of the County now started and finished at Hanley in the Northern Response Hub. For the Moorlands, this provided response ability in the form of three cars for three deployment locations. Leek Biddulph / Chell and Cheadle 24 hours a day.

The number of Neighbourhood Police Constables had risen from 10 to 22, PCSO's had reduced from 24 to 22 and there were 4 Sergeants.

Members queried the functions which were carried out from the Police Station in Leek, antisocial behaviour in Biddulph, drug related issues, accessibility of the Police Station in Cheadle and cars parked on pavements.

In response, Chief Inspector Thorley, advised that Neighbourhood Officers and PCSO's were based at Leek Police Station, along with the archives, Legacy Team and Probation Service. Response Officers also used the Station to carry out administration and for breaks whilst on shift.

Not all of the antisocial behaviour (ASB) in Biddulph could be attributed to one group of young people. The level of ASB had improved recently as a group had been

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identified and the Police had worked with the Youth Offending Team and issued Dispersal Notices.

The Moorlands was far less affected by new forms of drugs than the impression given by the national press and the Police worked with the Drug and Rehabilitation Services for drug related issues.

There was concern around the wait time for Non Emergency Number to be answered and the Chief Inspector agreed this was a an issue. The Team was working hard to improve this service and looked at alternative methods for members of the public to make contact for non emergency cases.

The Force had seen a 40% reduction in members of the public visiting a Police Station. Alternative ways to contact the Police included, pop-up surgeries, meetings at village halls, on-line communication and email. On a day to day basis PCSO's would be out and about in the community.

In relation to cars parked on pavements, the Panel was advised that it was a Police matter if a vehicle had caused an obstruction or was a danger and each case would be looked at individually.

Councillors praised the Officers which had attended monthly meetings in their wards and the Chair thanked Chief Inspector Thorley for his attendance at the meeting.

DECIDED: That the update be noted.

141 **ON STREET PAY AND DISPLAY PARKING - LEE BARNARD TMA ASSURANCE MANAGER & DAVID GREATBATCH (COMMUNITY HIGHWAYS LIAISON MANAGER).**

Lee Barnard, Traffic Management Act Manager, provided members with the background information on the proposed on-street pay and display parking across Staffordshire.

The Car Parking Strategy had been considered by the County Council's Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee in January 2019. The core principals which un-pinned the Strategy were:-

- A consistent approach to on and off street parking;
- A well structured regime for the management and charging of on street parking
- Parking facilities, arrangements and charging structures that reflected the needs of individual towns(including free parking); and
- A charging structure that reflected the varying demands of all the users of the services

The Strategy would help to enhance the quality of life for people living in town centres and ease traffic flow.

Members were very concerned about the proposals and thought that on-street pay and display parking would not be viable in the Staffordshire Moorlands. It was thought that the introduction of on-street parking would have a negative effect on businesses.

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The Officer confirmed that the locations for on- street parking had not been finalised, stakeholders would be consulted on the proposals for the various towns and concerns would be addressed as best as possible. Schemes would be tailored to local demand and compliment existing parking arrangements.

The Panel requested evidence of the misuse of the 45 minute on street parking bays in Leek and it was confirmed that that discrepancy of the parking around the market place would be looked into.

DECIDED: That the update be noted.

142 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel considered its Work Programme and agreed the items listed.

DECIDED: That the Panel's Work Programme for 2018/19 be agreed.

143 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.**

144 **TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.**

DECIDED: That the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm

_____Chairman _____Date