

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2019

PRESENT: Councillor K Flunder (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, R Alcock, C J S Atkins, G Bentley, C Brady, B Cawley, S Coleman, J Davies, M A Deaville, B Emery, E Fallows, M Gledhill, T Hall, A Hart, N Hawkins, G Heath, I Herdman, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, A Hulme, K J Jackson, B Johnson, J T Jones, I Lawson, L D Lea, L A Malyon, K Martin, L Page, I Plant, J Porter, D Price, S E Ralphs MBE, T Riley, P Roberts, P Routledge, J Salt, S Scalise, D Shaw, H Sheldon MBE, L Swindlehurst, P Taylor, E Wain, R Ward, I Whitehouse, P Wilkinson, P Wood, M Worthington and N Yates

APOLOGIES: Councillors G Bond, M Bowen, P Elkin, T McNicol, H Plimley and J Redfern

PRAYERS WERE OFFERED BY REVEREND NIGEL IRONS

27 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

27a COUNCIL ASSEMBLY - 26 JUNE 2019

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council Assembly held on 26 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27b COUNCIL - 10 JULY 2019

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

28 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Chairman permitted debate on a Government consultation exercise with regards to proposed reforms to permitted development rights to support the deployment of 5G and extend mobile coverage. Members were asked to forward their comments on the issue to Democratic Services in order for a response to be issued by the Council prior to the closing date of the consultation period, 4 November 2019.

29 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations were made:-

Agenda Item	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
10.2 Notice of Motion – Community Fire Stations	Cllr. T. Riley	Other interest - family member employed by Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service
	Cllr. G. Bentley	Other interest - volunteer for Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service
	Cllr. J. Salt	Other Interest - husband employed by Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service
10.3 Notice of Motion – Your Staffordshire Card	Cllr. K. Martin	Other Interest – employee of Staffordshire County Council
General – any matters arising relating to the Local Plan	Cllr. A. Hart	Other Interest – any matters relating to site specifics residential in Biddulph
General - Matters relating to Licensing	Cllrs. E. Wain, M. Deaville and P. Wilkinson	Other – anything related to licensing.

30 **CHAIRMAN'S OR LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bowen for the organisation of a shoot in aid of his charities. It was announced that future charitable events would include a Raceday at Uttoxeter Racecourse (24 November 2019) and a quiznight at Moorlands House (February 2020).

The Leader of the Council announced that Cllr H. Plimley had recently given birth to twins. It was resolved that a card and flowers should be sent to Cllr Plimley on behalf of the Council.

31 **DISPENSATION - CLLR PETER ELKIN**

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, Councillor Elkin be granted a dispensation from attending meetings of the Council and its constituent bodies due to his illness until the next meeting of the Council when the situation will be reviewed.

32 **TO CONSIDER AND DEBATE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET, OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS AND COMMITTEES.**

32a **CABINET 8 OCTOBER 2019 - CORPORATE PLAN 2019-23**

RESOLVED:

That the Council's vision, aims, objectives, influencing objectives and priorities be approved.

32b **AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE 26 JULY 2019 - ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2018/19**

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Treasury Management Report 2018/19 be approved.

32c **AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE 26 JULY 2019 - ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

RESOLVED:

That the treasury management position as at 30th June 2019 be noted.

32d **STANDARDS COMMITTEE 19 JULY 2019 - COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE - ETHICAL STANDARDS REVIEW**

RESOLVED:

That the revised Code of Conduct as attached at Appendix 3 of the report be approved.

33 **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND STATUTORY OFFICERS**

RESOLVED:

1. That the model Disciplinary Procedure and Guidance for the Chief Executive in accordance with the JNC Conditions of Service Handbook for Chief Executives be adopted.
2. That the same Disciplinary Procedure and Guidance for other officers who hold a statutory role (Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer) as recommended by the JNC for Chief Executives be adopted.
3. That an Investigating and Disciplinary Committee (IDC) in accordance with the JNC for Chief Executives Conditions of Service Handbook be established. The IDC should consist of an equal number of members from both Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) and High Peak Borough Council (HPBC), as a result of the Chief Executive and other statutory officers being jointly employed by the two councils.
4. That an elected member (the Chair of the IDC) with the designated power to suspend the Chief Executive and other statutory officers in an emergency be appointed.
5. That the Council's constitution be updated to comply with the JNC Conditions of Service Handbook for Chief Executives.

34 **NOTICES OF MOTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE NO.**

34a **SCHOOL MEALS DURING HOLIDAYS - CLLR S. RALPHS MBE**

“This Council recognises the importance of all children being properly nourished, including during school holidays when school meals may not available. This is particularly important for our most vulnerable children.

It is proposed, therefore, that the Council requests the Community Scrutiny Panel to consider this issue and to report to the Cabinet on the following:

- The extent of the problem of children not receiving adequate nourishment in the school holidays in the Staffordshire Moorlands;
- To engage with our local, regional and national partners and stakeholders to consider the extent of the problem in the Staffordshire Moorlands and potential solutions to address it;
- To develop with our partners an agreed plan of actions to address the problem in the Staffordshire Moorlands;
- To propose any changes to policy or funding considered necessary as a result of the review for the purposes of lobbying central government.”

As an **AMENDMENT** it was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that the Council introduces a pilot scheme in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

On being put to the vote, the **AMENDED MOTION** was declared **CARRIED**.

34b **COMMUNITY FIRE STATIONS - CLLR L. MALYON**

“That this Council writes to the Staffordshire Commissioner, Matthew Ellis, and ask him to keep all the community facilities in the fire stations, as they are important to all the community groups in the relevant area. Not to implement the changes in any more areas, that have already in Hanley and Tamworth moving towards Leek.”

As an **AMENDMENT** it was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** that the Council’s Political Group Leaders meet to agree a statement to be issued to the Staffordshire Commissioner and that the Council’s Chief Executive writes to Staffordshire Council Chief Executives to highlight the issue.

On being put to the vote, the **AMENDED MOTION** was declared **CARRIED**.

34c **YOUR STAFFORDSHIRE CARD - CLLR K. MARTIN**

“That this Council writes to Staffordshire County Council to strongly object to the withdrawal of the ‘Your Staffordshire Card’ as it will disadvantage approximately 8,500 young people. This was a vital service and needs to be reinstated. The card gave young people, particularly in isolated rural areas, their independence and access to further education, employment and other opportunities.”

On being put to the vote, the **MOTION** was declared **CARRIED**.

1. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change received from Councillor Gledhill:

“Given the recent designation of Leek Town Centre and Cellarhead Traffic Lights as Air Quality Management Areas owing to excess levels of Nitrogen Dioxide being emitted from passing vehicles and causing air pollution, what steps are being taken by SMDC to deal with this situation and its impact on public health?”

Response:

Now the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared, Air Quality Action Plans have to be produced within 12 months. The Council will identify steps which can be implemented to try and reduce the level of nitrogen dioxide below the national objectives and will formally consult on the plan.

The range of options for reducing the level of traffic pollution are very wide but not all options will be helpful in the area. Some of these steps could include changing road priorities both within the AQMAs or outside them; using traffic calming to either restrict traffic flow or make it flow more smoothly; or providing alternative routes for the vehicles to travel where the pollution levels will not have a significant impact. Changes could also be made to alter the number of heavy vehicles using roads although the benefits of this appear, at the moment, to be limited. The following promotions have taken place so far:

- 2 members of staff have been appointed to work with schools and businesses
- A business event was held in August
- Links to Air Quality Grants have been placed on the Council’s website in relation to EV Charging Points for business
- An ECO Stars Scheme, a haulage specific campaign, has been launched

The Council has engaged/will be engaging with the following schools in the area:

- Westwood First School
- All Saints First School
- Cellarhead
- St Edwards Middle School (15,16th October)
- Churnet View Middle (TBA)
- St Marys (TBA)

An Air Aware Scheme is currently being promoted in partnership with Staffordshire County Council. This is linked to schools and businesses with options to consider including:

- Leave your car at home (public transport)
- Car share
- Turn your engine off
- Cycle/Walk/Scoot
- Alternative routes
- Future proof with alternative fuels
- Energy at home

The Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has just announced the Air Quality Grant for 19/20 to support projects designed to:

- Provide air quality benefits soon (in the next 1 to 2 years)
- Develop solutions over the longer term by increasing awareness and encouraging

Meetings and engagement scheduled to support the development of the Action Plans include:

- Integrated Transport Plan 2018 review
- Staffordshire Air Quality forum meeting on Wednesday 16th October 2019, to commence formal engagement with the Highways Authority
- Air Quality Project Board meeting on Thursday 17th October 2019 (including representatives from the County Council and Public Health service) to discuss promotion and aligning activities with our partners.

The Council currently has 45 monitoring tubes across the Moorlands. The monitoring point locations are reviewed at the end of every year and the Council will target areas of concern. The next review will be January. The Monitoring points are rotated throughout the District. Councillors and members of the public can suggest areas of concern and the Pollution Team will look to respond and site monitoring points accordingly.

In response to supplementary questions the Portfolio Holder confirmed that ward councillors would be notified in advance when testing was conducted in their wards and that he would attend meetings with County Highways with the Council's officers.

2. Question to the Leader of the Council received from Councillor Yates:

“The recent work undertaken to resolve and remedy the blight of long term empty houses, and for that matter redundant buildings in general, has highlighted the shortcomings in the Council Tax and Business Rates policy for vacant properties.

Could a review, under the auspices of the Community O&S Work Programme be undertaken to review and amend the terms and the application of this policy to encourage timely redevelopment and return to use by giving Council Tax/Business Rate holidays for these properties and to prevent "land and property banking" by owners by increasing charges if properties are left empty over time?”

Response:

In line with the relevant regulations, the Council currently offer discounts and exemptions in relation to uninhabitable properties and short-term empty properties to encourage owners to bring these properties back into use.

The Council takes a robust approach to addressing empty properties in the District and more recently, the Council has engaged with an external company to undertake a review of empty properties over 6 months, which involves an initial canvass followed by an inspection if required. Following completion of this review, the Council intends to issue a questionnaire to the owners of those properties that remain empty to understand the reasons why the properties are empty and look to support them where possible in bringing those properties back into use.

There is a commitment in the Committee work programme to provide an Empty Property Update at a future Resources Overview & Scrutiny meeting. Alongside this the Council will also be reviewing the Council Tax/Business Rates Discounts, Exemptions and Reliefs policies – which will include a review of the current long-term empty premium.

In response to supplementary questions the Leader of the Council confirmed that issues related to properties exempt from business rates (e.g. church and community buildings that have passed into private hands) and uninhabited and derelict properties could be included in the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel Work Programme.

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

“To ask the Leader of the Council what progress she has made in her discussions on the provision and improvement of bus services in the Staffordshire Moorlands.”

Response:

The Leader of the Council stated that she had attended parish council meetings over the previous months. A lot of information had been collated and she was now in the process of liaising with bus companies to get the best possible deal for the Staffordshire Moorlands.

36 TO CONSIDER ANY POLITICAL GROUP APPOINTMENTS OR CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP, IF ANY.

The Leader of the Council announced that Cllr M. Worthington would replace Councillor P. Roberts as the Chair of the Appeals Board.

Councillor Malyon announced that Councillor P. Wilkinson would replace Councillor P. Elkin on the Planning Applications Committee.

37 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC:

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 100 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.

EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Exempt Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 8.57 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date