

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2019

PRESENT: Councillor R Ward (Chair)

Councillors G Bentley, C Brady, B Emery, K Flunder, I Herdman, K Hoptroff, L Page, P Roberts and H Sheldon MBE.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor M A Deaville, M Gledhill, K J Jackson, L D Lea, L A Malyon, J Porter, S Scalise, E Wain, C J S Atkins, B Cawley and L Swindlehurst.

APOLOGIES: Councillors P Elkin, A Hart, N Hawkins, H Plimley, D Price, J Redfern and J Salt.

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

DECIDED – That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on 25 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

85 **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS, IF ANY. (24 HOURS NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CHAIRMAN).**

There were no urgent items of business.

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

The following members substituted:

- Councillor Jackson for Councillor Price
- Councillor Gledhill for Councillor Salt
- Councillor Malyon for Councillor Elkin

87 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:-**

No declarations of interest were made.

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

There were none.

89 **LEISURE CENTRE PERFORMANCE UPDATE - ALEX GODFREY, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, PARKWOOD LEISURE. (PRESENTATION)**

The Panel received a presentation from the representatives from Parkwood Leisure which covered the following subject areas:

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- State of the Nation Summary 2019
- Staffordshire Moorlands Contract Highlights
- Partnership Working
- Key Usage Statistics (January to October)
- SMDC Visitor numbers
- Memberships Club Live 2018 v 2019
- Member Demographics for all sites
- Member Postcode Analysis 2019
- Identified Sport and Physical Activity Strategy Priorities
- Carbon Reduction and Single Use Plastics
- Customer Satisfaction 2019
- Apprenticeships and Staff Development
- Parkwood Investments at Brough Park, Biddulph Valley and South Moorlands Leisure Centre
- Planned Authority Capital Works
- Brough Park Pool Works
- Continual Improvement for 2020

Members thanked the officers for the professional and informative presentation and were pleased with the investment proposals and capital works to the leisure centres.

Discussion took place around discounts for swimming lessons, drown prevention week and how disabled and older people were encouraged to use the facilities at the sites. The Panel was advised that Parkwood worked with partnership groups, offered activities, one-to-one swimming lessons and provided free access for carers. A discount scheme was available for people aged 55+ and some fitness classes were designed for less mobile people. Following a free 12 week Step to Health leisure centre membership, 70-75% of customers were retained on a membership scheme. There was concern around the hoist to access the pool at Brough Park Leisure Centre as it was felt this was antiquated and that this should be improved.

A member asked if solar panels were to be incorporated into the roofing works at Brough Park Leisure Centre and it was confirmed that this wasn't included in the specification of works.

The locker upgrades planned at Brough Park were welcomed and officers advised that the current charge to use lockers at this site would remain the same following the upgrade.

The Panel was advised that the Council monitored customer feedback and investigated certain issues alongside the contractor.

Discussion also took place around alternative heating systems, facilities for female football teams and a request was made for details of further work on carbon reduction for the next years presentation.

DECIDED: That the presentation be **NOTED**.

90 LEISURE CENTRE OPTIONS

Robert Wilks – Principal Officer (Leisure and Recreation), introduced a report which informed the Panel of the development work to help establish clear

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plans for future investment and management options for the Council's leisure centres, in line with the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy and ambitions for a reduced service subsidy.

Discussion took place around integrated leisure / health hubs, improvement and better use of the parks and pool sizes.

A member of the Panel stressed the importance of the Council to consider both delivery options available for the future management arrangements for leisure centres once the contract with Parkwood came to an end in March 2024.

Other key points/comments made by members in relation to the leisure centres were:-

- That the Swimming Clubs should be consulted to ascertain their requirements
- For smaller pools to be retained
- For any funding to be equally spent on the 3 leisure centre sites
- Improved maintenance of the shrubbery areas

DECIDED: That the Panel **NOTE** the plans to recruit external consultancy support in order to assist the Council in progressing plans for future investment and management options for leisure centres

91 **ACCELERATED HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME UPDATE.**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the progress of the Accelerated Housing Delivery Programme (AHDP). The AHDP was a package of measures to tackle the low level of development activity.

The Staffordshire Moorlands had suffered from low levels of development for many years. Planning approvals were being granted on sites but some were not coming forward to the construction phase.

In order to tackle this problem the Council listened to the issues raised by developers and developed a comprehensive delivery programme to tackle the problem. The AHDP was approved by members in April 2018.

The accelerated housing delivery programme had two aims, to;

- Drive forward delivery of the local plan and maintain 5 year land supply by proactive measures and Council led interventions where appropriate.
- Deliver community benefits in form of increased income from council tax, business rates and New Homes Bonus for reinvestment in the community.

In the short time the AHPD had been operational, officers had achieved the following outcomes;

- 34 affordable homes completed in 2018/19
- Successful bid to LGF for Growth Fund Deal grant for Blythe Park

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Extension Infrastructure Scheme £1,250,000

- Successful EOI to Homes England, Small Sites Fund with invitation to make a full funding application for Cornhill, Leek
- Completion of the Investment and Acquisition Strategy
- Completion of Wharf Road and Tunstall Road masterplans
- Anticipated completion of Cheadle Town Centre masterplan December 2019
- Strengthen and improved relationship with local registered providers

However, the latest demographic information showed that in 2018 the population in Staffordshire Moorlands declined for the first time in many years. It was the only Staffordshire district to see a decline in population.

The lack of new housing growth had exacerbating these demographic trends. In 2018/19 there were 140 new homes completed in the district. This compares to 660 in Stafford, 620 in East Staffordshire. Only 2.2% of houses sold in Staffordshire Moorlands were new homes. This is the tenth lowest figure for local authorities in England (out of 382 councils).

This low level of housing delivery combined with an ageing population leads to low investment in the town centre and high levels of empty shops, difficulty in recruitment, Investment going to higher growth areas, leading to a reduction in income to the Council and other public services. Therefore there was a continued need to drive the accelerated housing delivery programme.

Dai Lerner – Executive Director (Place), introduced a presentation which covered the following topics:-

- The problem
- Few new houses being built and sold
- Depopulation
- Deaths exceed births
- Missing young productive people

Members were disappointed that in some cases, planning permission had been granted which included a number of affordable houses and then developers were unable to fulfil the affordable housing quota, due to viability reasons. A letter had been sent to the Secretary of State in relation to this matter and the response to this would be chased up.

Examples of young families who occupied bungalows were described by a member and it was felt that there weren't enough properties being built for elderly people. It was vital for the correct balance of housing to be built for the elderly and younger generation.

There was a level of concern in relation to facilities being built and infrastructure to meet the demand created by new development sites. In particular, facilities for young people and larger entertainment venues. It was also the opinion of some members that such ideas should be gathered from local people.

Discussion took place around the development of the mills in Leek and that these sites were not being developed like they had in city centres due to lower land prices, viability and demand.

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Members also commented that there could be improvements to the size of industrial units in the area and to the digital infrastructure.

DECIDED: That Councillors **NOTE** the update report.

92 MARKETS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Sara Porru – Head of Regeneration, introduced a report which recommended proposed changes to Leek Market’s rules and regulations to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the market operation. These changes included the withdrawal of free or reduced stall rents, withdrawal of cash payments and the introduction of an administration charge for issuing or amending market traders concessionary parking permits.

The Panel was advised that the first recommendation within the report - *(Remove the annual two free trading weeks for regular traders in the Leek Trestle Market)* had now been removed.

The Panel was in agreement that stalls should still be paid for if the holder did not turn up to trade and with the introduction of direct debit payments.

A suggestion was made for the registration number to be removed from the parking permits to eliminate the need to change the pass when a trader changed their vehicle. Councillor Wain agreed to discuss this matter at the next Cabinet meeting and officers would also look into this suggestion.

DECIDED:

That the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel **RECOMMENDED** Cabinet to:

- 1) Remove the concession whereby Charter market traders pay only half of the stall rent if they do not attend a pre booked market;
- 2) Move all regular stall holders to a direct debit payment method;
- 3) Introduce a £10.00 administration charge to issue or amend parking permits for market traders, subject to, the removal of registration numbers from permits being considered by officers and Cabinet members.

93 WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered its Work Programme and agreed the items listed, subject to, an item on Assets of Community Value being added to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme.

DECIDED: That the Work Programme for 2019-20 be agreed.

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

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 nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that exempt 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 100I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the paragraphs indicated.

95 **EXEMPT MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

DECIDED: That the exempt minutes from the meeting held on 25th September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date