



## COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL AGENDA

**Date:** Monday, 27 July 2020

**Time:** 6.00 pm

**Venue:** Virtual Meeting

17 July 2020

### PART 1

1. Apologies.
2. To Approve the Minutes of the Previous Meeting. **(Pages 3 - 8)**
3. Minutes from the last meeting of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel. **(Pages 9 - 16)**
4. Notification of Substitute Members, if any.
5. Declaration of Interests:
  - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
  - Other Interests
6. Questions to Portfolio Holders, if any.  
***(At least two clear days notice required, in writing, to the Proper Officer in accordance with Procedure Rule 15).***
7. COVID- 19 Pandemic - Community Recovery **(Pages 17 - 24)**
8. Work Programme  
Any additional items to be added to the Work Programme:
  - Chair's Items
  - Members' Items

**MARK TRILLO**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

Membership of Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Councillor D Shaw (Chair)

Councillor J Aberley

Councillor G Heath

Councillor K Hoptroff

Councillor B Johnson

Councillor K Martin

Councillor P Roberts

Councillor P Taylor

Councillor P Wood

Councillor T McNicol (Vice-Chair)

Councillor G Bentley

Councillor I Herdman

Councillor B A Hughes

Councillor J T Jones

Councillor T Riley

Councillor L Swindlehurst

Councillor R Ward

Councillor N Yates

## STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING**

#### **Minutes**

**MONDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2020**

PRESENT: Councillor D Shaw (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, G Bentley, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, B Johnson, J T Jones, K Martin, T McNicol, T Riley, P Roberts, L Swindlehurst, P Taylor, P Wood and N Yates.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor M Bowen, M Gledhill, L A Malyon, I Plant, J Porter and S E Ralphs MBE.

APOLOGIES: Councillors I Herdman and R Ward

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

**DECIDED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to, Councillor Johnson's apologies being recorded.

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

There were no substitute members.

170 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

<b>Agenda No.</b>	<b>Member Declaring Interest</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Agenda Item 8 – Flyposting, banners and advertisements	Cllr B. Johnson	Other – Director of a business which produces 'A' boards

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

No questions to Portfolio Holders had been received.

172 **LOCAL POLICING TEAM ANNUAL UPDATE.**

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Chief Inspector Mark Thorley was in attendance accompanied by Sergeant Rob Peacock, to provide the annual Policing Team update.

Overall, crime was down by 15% compared to 10% nationally. Policing in the wake of austerity continued to be a challenge, however the Moorlands Policing Team continued to work hard, found new and innovative ways to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, work ever closer with partners for the benefit of the community, with some notable successes but also the occasional spike in acquisitive crime.

The following statistical information was provided:

- Less serious violent crime with injury, 40% reduction (290 less crimes)
- More serious violent crime with injury, 34% reduction (21 less crimes)
- Burglary residential, 12% reduction (19 less offences)
- Criminal damage, 21% reduction, (160 less offences)
- Theft from motor vehicles, a 40% increase (45 more crimes)
- Theft of motor vehicles, a 9% increase which had increased since October (6 more crimes)
- Police visibility was at 73%, compared to 63% nationally
- Public space violence had reduced by 13%, compared to 15% nationally
- Anti-social behaviour, 6% reduction (115 less incidents)
- 2% reduction in collisions classed as killed or seriously injured

The past year had again seen travelling criminals target the Moorlands, the nature of the geography would always mean that this was a vulnerability, but the recently created Force Road Policing Unit would now support the Local Policing Team, by patrolling and targeting the road networks to identify and apprehend those travelling criminals, using intelligence led tactics to provide a tailored and effective response.

As well as the challenge to deter travelling criminals the team had seen the actions of a small number of local criminals impact heavily on vehicle crime offences.

Most notably in the Cheddleton and Leek areas where two separate offenders, during the summer months targeted insecure vehicles parked overnight. Both were identified, one recalled to prison, the other after a number of court appearances, was remanded in custody.

Prior to and upon release from prison, the Police continued to work with prolific offenders to ensure the motivation to commit crime was removed or reduced. To date neither had yet re-offended.

Staffing levels remained the same for the area, apart from a Civilian Vulnerability Co-ordinator who would be in post shortly, to work within the harm reduction hub at Leek.

The Chair complimented the officers who were involved with a problem which concerned teenagers in the Werrington area, which was successfully resolved, and congratulations were passed on to the officers in Leek for the work they had carried out to reduce crime. The excellent work of the PSCOs in Biddulph was also mentioned.

A member of the Panel explained that he and a number of constituents were concerned about the level of drug use in the ~~Page 4~~ area. Chief Inspector Thorley advised

## **Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 3 February 2020**

that the matter of drugs was high on the agenda and that Sergeants reported to him on a fortnightly basis. Should anyone wish to report any specific concerns then these could be emailed to the Chief Inspector or directly to Staffordshire Police.

Discussion took place around the area outside schools being dangerous due to a lack of school crossing patrols and a high volume of cars. Members also raised a recent problem with theft from walls and enquired about the speed of Armed Response Officers locally. These concerns were shared by the officers and the Panel was advised that PCSOs were tasked to patrol outside schools. There hadn't been a great deal of theft from walls reported and members were encouraged to report any issues. The Armed Response Unit could be deployed where necessary, 24 hours a day and provided good response times to the area. Other neighbouring Forces could also be called upon should the need arise.

Alleged exploitation of young people, the use of drugs and gases in Cheadle was debated by the Panel. Warrants, Stop Searches and work in schools had been carried out but should any member be of the opinion that matters were not being addressed, then they should report this directly to Chief Inspector Thorley. In the meantime, he would contact the Sergeant for this area. It was also explained to the Panel, that some gases could be purchased legally, it was the use of the gases that was the problem. A request was made for a Police presence in Caverswall, as a similar issue with gas cylinders had been identified at this location.

Further discussion took place around dangerous dogs, theft of pets, recruitment of special constables and the use of the new Staffordshire Smart Alert system. A member queried how the Police visibility was measured and it clarified that this was a record of the time officers' radios were outside of the Police Station.

### **DECIDED:**

- 1) That the update be noted;
- 2) For statistics on the number of convictions be provided at the next annual update.

### **173 CHILDREN'S MEALS IN HOLIDAYS. (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Further to this matter being debated at Full Council in October 2019, Councillor Ralphs updated the Panel on the work she had undertaken on this important issue. Over the last few months, meetings had taken place with various people which included, head teachers and heads of governing bodies, with a view to provide school meals from a school hall during the school holidays, on a trial basis. The next stage of the process was to investigate how this trial could be funded, and to look into the viability of this being linked to the SPACE Programme.

Members welcomed this challenging task and offered their support. A request was made for the children in the rural areas to be accommodated and members highlighted the need to meet with various local schools, in relation to the logistical arrangements for the provision of meals during the holidays.

A member of the Panel advised that some of the most vulnerable children did not attend school and suggested that the foodbanks were also contacted.

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### **DECIDED:**

- 1) That the update be noted;
- 2) For the Leader to be invited to attend a meeting of the Panel in 6 months time.

### 174 FLYPOSTING, BANNERS AND ADVERTISEMENTS. (PRESENTATION/VERBAL UPDATE)

At the request of the Panel, Ben Haywood, Head of Development Services and David Smith, Principal Officer Communities and Partnerships, provided a presentation on flyposting, banners and advertisements.

The presentation covered the following topics:-

- Definition of an advertisement
- Control of adverts
- Consent of adverts
- Examples of adverts which do not require consent
- Adverts with deemed consent
- Adverts which require consent
- Advertisement consent
- Other consents
- Enforcement

Officers were given examples of advertisements on trailers, outside football grounds and on railings and asked if these required consent. A trailer would require consent if it has been adapted principally for advertisement and this was also the case for adverts on the exterior of a football ground.

Councillor Atkins was particularly concerned about the number of banners and amount of flyposting around Leek town centre, which made the area look unsightly. She didn't object to the advertisement of temporary events, but felt that the Council should adopt a proactive policy which enabled the Council to remove such advertisements and prosecute repeat offenders. The number of 'A' boards situated in the town centres were also mentioned as they were a potential hazard. There seemed to be a similar problem in Werrington outside the shops, close to the junction with the main road, therefore, officers agreed to look into the issues raised. The officers advised that 'A' boards were not included within the policy for flyposting and were generally classed as an obstruction to the highway. A member of the Panel had a different opinion on the use of 'A' boards, as he thought that these were beneficial to the businesses on the high streets.

### **DECIDED:**

- 1) That the presentation be noted;
- 2) For the presentation and advertisement guide be emailed to members;
- 3) For the Enforcement Team to take a look at the advertisement banners and 'A' boards in Leek and Werrington;
- 4) For the Flyposting policy to be reviewed.

### 175 DOG FOULING ORDER

## **Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 3 February 2020**

The Panel gave its consideration to a report which detailed proposed changes to the Dog Fouling Order, which was due to cease to have effect on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Staffordshire Moorlands was currently covered by four Orders which made it an offence if a person in charge of a dog at the relevant time did not:

- remove dog faeces forthwith if the dog defecated;
- put and keep a dog on a lead if required to do so by a Council Officer to prevent the dog causing annoyance or disturbance to any other person or the worrying or disturbance of any animal or bird;
- keep a dog on a lead in specified areas;
- stop a dog from entering specified areas.

The Orders would cease to have effect and thus need to be extended or replaced if the Council wished to continue to have the power to take action in respect of dog fouling and nuisance behaviour.

The latter two orders (Dogs on a Lead Order and Dog Exclusion Order), had not been used since their introduction in 2011. It was proposed that these Orders be allowed to expire in October 2020. The Panel had concerns in relation to this proposal and did not want these orders to expire.

### **DECIDED:**

The Panel **RECOMMENDED CABINET:**

- 1) **NOT** to allow the (Dogs on a Lead Order and Dog Exclusion Order) to expire;
- 2) **AGREE** to carry out public consultation on the draft Order appended to the report;
- 3) Subsequently **APPROVE** the draft Order by Delegated Decision unless the responses from the consultation necessitate material changes to the draft Order;
- 4) In the event of a new order being approved prior to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, formal notice of discharge of the existing Orders should be published simultaneously with the introduction of the replacement Order.

## 176 **WORK PROGRAMME**

At this point of the meeting, members discussed the possibility of a Your Housing Group Drop-in session being arranged, prior to the next meeting of the Panel. This would enable members to discuss specific tenant issues with a member of staff, rather than discussion taking place during the scrutiny meeting.

Members raised queries in relation to air quality monitors and were advised that they could liaise directly with Daniel McCrory, Senior Pollution Officer for such matters.

### **DECIDED:**

**Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 3 February 2020**

- 1) That the Panel's Work Programme for 2019/20 be agreed;
- 2) For the Your Housing Drop-in session to be arranged.

The meeting closed at 5.00 pm

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date

## Minutes of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel Meeting held on 10 February 2020

Present: Stephen Sweeney (Chairman)

Shelia Cartwright (Substitute)	Brian Edwards
Randolph Conteh	Tony Holmes
Paul Darby	Keith Walker
Ann Edgeller	

**Apologies:** Carl Bennett, Susan Finney, Simon Gaskin and Ashley Yeates

### PART ONE

#### 36. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

#### 37. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2020

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Panel meeting held on 28 October 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### 38. Decisions published by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) since the last Panel meeting

Details were submitted of decisions published by the Commissioner since the last Panel meeting.

*Termination of Contract with Boeing Defence UK for the provision of IT services to Staffordshire Police and the Staffordshire Commissioner (Decision no. 2019/20-006) –*

Members sought more information on the decision to terminate the IT Transformation Contract entered into with Boeing in 2016 originally for a ten year period at an estimated cost of £110m. Boeing had been appointed to modernise, develop and deliver IT services to Staffordshire Police. The Commissioner reported that over time the Force requirements and aspirations had changed. This had coincided with Boeing reviewing their Business model therefore both parties had mutually agreed to terminate the contract. He gave assurances that the termination agreement was not detrimental to the Force and agreed to provide information on the spend and services received during the operation of the contract. He further reported that Boeing would be honouring their commitment to the Niche Project which is due to go live in April 2020 (bringing together 12 core IT database systems). Following cessation of the contract IT transformation would be managed in house by the Force.

**RESOLVED** – That the decision be noted and members be provided with details of spend and services delivered during the operation of the Contract.

### **39. Questions to the PFCC from Members of the Public**

There were no questions from members of the public on this occasion.

### **40. National Conference for Police, Fire and Crime Panels/National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels AGM- Feedback Report**

The Panel received a report from its member and officer representatives at the AGM of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels and the National Conference for Panels, both held on 19 November 2019.

The National Association had agreed amendments to its Constitution to enable it to be a subscription free organisation due to difficulties experienced by some Panels in securing funding for that fee. The Association would facilitate networking and information sharing with training opportunities offered whenever possible.

Workshops attended as part of the National Conference had included discussions on 'Effective Scrutiny' with reference to the importance of a clear understanding of the relationship between, and role of, each of the parties involved in Panels. It was also noted that the majority of Panels had Force representation at their meetings.

Other Workshop themes included 'Reducing the arrests of women' which had received information on a three year project to stem the flow of women entering the Criminal Justice System and recognising the different approach needed for the management of women in the system.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

### **41. Proposed Police Budget and Precept 2020/21**

#### **a) Proposed Policing Precept and Budget 2020/21**

The Commissioner reported that the Home Office Grant Settlement for Staffordshire had been set at £131.479million, an increase of £10.5million on the previous year. The total policing requirement was £212.402 million with the Commissioner proposing to part fund the balance from an increase in Precept of 3.94% (£8.53 pa per Band D property). The Commissioner acknowledged that this figure was marginally below the permitted Referendum limit of £10 but felt that it struck a balance between what could reasonably be asked of Council tax payers and the investment required in local policing.

The Home Office Settlement was noted to include £2.532million ring fenced for the recruitment of 90 additional officers by 31 March 2021. This was Staffordshire's target number for the first phase of the 20,000 additional officers promised in the Governments manifesto. Receipt of the ringfenced funding was dependent on the 90 officers being recruited however the sum available would not fully fund that number of posts. More details on the funding and conditions attached were awaited therefore the Commissioner was unable to answer queries raised by panel members as to whether it might be awarded on a pro rata basis should it not prove possible to recruit 90 officers in one year. The Commissioner was confident that the target could be met with a recruitment programme being developed and made reference to his belief that future

years' increases in manpower might not automatically be entirely made up warranted officers. He predicted recognition of the need for specific expertise to address the changing nature of crime (eg Cyber crime)

The Commissioner referred to the latest published Crime figures which showed Staffordshire to be one of four Forces recording a reduction in crime levels, and reported on his continued commitment to ensuring that budgets were allocated to areas where maximum benefit would be realised. To this end, for the remainder of the increased funding his proposals included: investment in the Special Constabulary to enhance their role in the community, investment in ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) to support the further growth of the Team and its capability in terms of tracking offenders throughout the County and beyond, further expenditure on technology and digital capability in order to maximise their benefits (eg. purchasing the most up to date mobile devices), and investment in IT software to assist with demand management and prioritising the deployment of resources.

The Panel noted that the Settlement was for one year only in view of Government's Capital Spending Review and acknowledged the increased level of risk built into the 2020/21 Budgets due to uncertainty around future funding.

The Commissioner submitted an updated MTFS for the period 2020/21 – 2023/24 which showed the funding gap for 2019/20 had been resolved due to a combination of unpredicted increases in funding streams. Future predicted funding gaps were partly attributed to the fact that the capital spending review was for one year only. Further analysis would be required however the prediction was a deficit of £3.328m by 2024.

Members questioned the assumptions on which the MTFS was based, particularly on police pay, non-pay costs and the Council tax base. The Commissioner reported confidence in the latter two but acknowledged concern expressed at the 2.5% assumed increase in police pay, particularly as the full details were not yet available on the full funding of the additional officers required by central government.

Whilst welcoming the ongoing investment in technology, members sought clarification of the allocation to front line systems (eg the 101 service). Responding the Commissioner reported that investment would provide alternative on-line reporting options.

The Panel further queried the effect on the MTFS of collaborative working. The Commissioner reported that whilst the 2020/21 budget proposals did not include specifics, the shared use of facilities would reduce Police costs.

**RESOLVED** – That the proposed budget and Precept increase of 3.94% (£8.53 per annum, per household (Band D) ) be supported and the Commissioner be notified accordingly.

b) Policing Treasury Management Strategy

The Policing Precept was supported by the Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 which set out proposals for the management of the Commissioner's cash flows, borrowing and investments for the Police Service, and their associated risks. The

Strategy adhered to both CIPFA Guidance and the requirements of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The key point of the 2020/21 Strategy was the intention to reduce the level of borrowing by funding a number of developments from cash reserves.

**RESOLVED** – That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 be noted.

c) Reserves Strategy

The Commissioner reported that in line with his statutory obligation to have regard to the level of Reserves needed to meet estimated future expenditure he had provided a gradual increase in the level of Reserves and that for 2020/21 the General Reserve would be maintained at £5.9m. Earmarked Reserves would fluctuate during the next 5 year period due to a number of large replacement programmes (eg Niche and Vehicle Replacements), and was forecast to be around £2.9m by 2024.

**RESOLVED** – That the Reserves Strategy and the levels proposed up to 2023/24 be noted.

d) Capital Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy

The Commissioner presented his Capital Strategy to 2023/24 setting out investment proposals for the period and the amount of Capital funding required. The Programme showed a reducing borrowing requirement of the period with the total funding requirement falling from £16.367million in 2020/21 to £5.250million in 2023/24.

**RESOLVED** – That the Capital Strategy and Programme up to 2023/24 be noted.

#### **42. Draft Annual Report of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner 2019/20**

As this was the Commissioner's last meeting with the Panel/last Annual Report before retiring from Office, the draft report, on which the Panel is required to formally comment, provided a summary of the progress made throughout his period in office on initiatives under each of the 5 themes of his Strategy.

The Commissioner highlighted a number of projects which he considered to have made a major impact on policing, the public's confidence in policing, and support to the community. These included the implementation of mobile technology across the Force, raising awareness of domestic abuse and improved support for its victims, changes to the way in which individuals with mental health issues were dealt with/assisted by the Police, the Cadets Scheme, including the Junior Cadets initiative, and the revival of the SPACE scheme and its proven effect on reducing Anti-Social Behaviour during the periods when it is in operation. He referred to the significant role played by his Deputy in the instigation and delivery of some of the schemes and voiced particular satisfaction at the changes he'd overseen in the way in which the Force dealt with persons with mental health issues.

The report referred to the intervention and prevention work undertaken to tackle serious violence, highlighting national recognition that health and social issues were contributory

factors. Panel members called for a clearer indication of how the Commissioner's work fulfilled the Home Office strategy for Combatting Serious Violence, the delivery of which was the responsibility of Commissioners.

The Commissioner concluded by suggesting that focus in the future needed to turn to reform of the Prison Service and development of schemes for the reintegration of prisoners into the community.

**RESOLVED** – That the draft report be noted and the Chairman be authorised to approve its final version, the Commissioner to be requested to include reference in that version to the delivery of the Home Office strategy on Combatting Serious Violence.

#### **43. Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority - Proposed Budget and Precept 2020/21**

##### a) Proposed Fire Revenue Budget 2020/21 (incl MTFs and Precept)

The Service was reported to need a total net revenue budget of £42.404m for 2020/2021, of which £14.618m was Settlement funding made up of Revenue Support Grant, 1% allocation of local business rates and a top up of Business rates by Government. Of note was the resulting £314,000 increase in central Government funding, the first increase since 2012/13. The balance (£27.785m) was to be met from the Precept hence the Commissioner intended to apply the full 1.99% permitted increase (ie £1.51pa for a Band D property).

The Commissioner explained his wish to provide an element of flexibility into the Fire and Rescue Budget to help accommodate a number of uncertainties such as the final pay award to firefighters compared to the 2.5% assumption built into the budget, and the outcome of ongoing legal challenges around Firefighters' pensions. Responding to questions on the progress of pay award negotiations, the Commissioner referred to the uncertain budget position that their lengthy nature had created. The General Reserves were being maintained at a relatively high level in view of that uncertainty.

The budget included a £0.3m deficit in the current financial year. The Commissioner gave assurances that a number of effectiveness and efficiency workstreams were in place to achieve the necessary savings.

The MTFs for the period to 2024/25 predicted a widening budget gap to £1.5m by 2024/25 reflecting the anticipated outcome of the next Comprehensive Spending Review and the effect which the Fair Funding Review might have on Staffordshire's funding position. The Panel acknowledged the uncertainty created by Central Government only committing to one years' funding pending those Reviews but noted the continuation of Pension Grants into 2020/21 which provided 90% of the additional costs of Firefighter Pension Costs resulting from the 2016 Valuation of their Scheme.

The assumptions on which the MTFs was based were queried particularly the non-pay costs increases of up to 5%. It was explained that for the Fire and Rescue Service cost estimates could be more specific than was possible for other areas of the Commissioners responsibilities.

Responding to questions on the financial effect of collaborative working, the Commissioner reported that, whilst any potential savings had not been built into the 2020/21 budget, savings realised from the Shared Services initiatives had funded 3 additional 'preventative' posts in the Fire and Rescue Service. In addition, the shared use of facilities would generate income for the Fire and Rescue Service.

**RESOLVED** – That the proposed 2020/21 budget and Precept for the Fire and Rescue Service be supported and the Commissioner be notified accordingly.

b) Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2020/21 -2022/23 (incl Minimum Revenue Provision Policy)

The proposed Precept for the Fire and Rescue Service was supported by the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for the period to 2022/23. The Strategy formed part of the overall planning framework for the Service ensuring that the necessary physical resources were available to achieve service aspirations.

The funding streams for the Capital Programme were outlined together with details of proposed areas of expenditure.

**RESOLVED** – That the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme to 2022/23 be noted.

c) Fire Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21

Details were submitted of the Fire and Rescue Authority's Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 which set out the way in which the Authority intended to manage its cash flows, borrowing and investments and their associated risks.

The strategy was unchanged from the current financial year. It aimed to ensure the use of cash rather than borrowing as far as possible whilst retaining the option to borrow up to £3million if necessary. It was confirmed that the Strategy complied with CIPFA and Central Government guidance.

**RESOLVED** – That the Treasury Management Strategy, including the intended borrowing limit, for the period to 2022/23 be noted.

#### **44. HMICFRS Review of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service 2018/19**

Following a new Inspection Regime, Her Majesty's Inspectorate had carried out its first inspection of the SFRS with the brief - 'to assess how effectively and efficiently the Service prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies, and assesses how well it looks after the people who work for the Service'.

The Commissioner reported that the Inspection had judged the SFRS to be 'Good' in all 3 core questions (Effectiveness, Efficiency and People), 'Good' in 10 of the 11 elements of those 3 core questions, and 'Outstanding' at the 11<sup>th</sup> element – promoting the right values and culture.

The Commissioner's report included an analysis of each of the elements rated giving a summary of the measures and processes in place or being developed which had

achieved the ratings. Whilst welcoming the favourable outcomes of the inspection the Commissioner stressed that he and the Chief Fire Officer would work to maintain those standards, seek improvements where needed and explore options for developing the service, maximising any benefits which collaborative working with the Police and other agencies might provide.

Members congratulated the Service on its achievements and commented on the strong foundations and leadership which had led to that success.

**RESOLVED** – That the outcome of the HMICFRS Inspection be noted.

#### **45. SFRS Corporate Safety Plan 2017-20 -Update Report**

The Commissioner submitted a progress report on the delivery of the Corporate Safety Plan, illustrating how projects and initiatives being pursued by the Service were fulfilling the principles on which the Plan was based and the three priorities for the Service namely, Education and Engagement, Community Safety and Wellbeing and Planning, Resilience and Response.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

#### **46. Questions to the PFCC by Panel Members**

Members of the Panel questioned/sought the views of the Commissioner on the following issues and received the responses indicated:

<b>Question/Issue</b>	<b>Response</b>
Are Community Groups using Fire Station Community Facilities required to have Indemnity Insurance?	A response will be provided
Can the Commissioner evidence the spend/effectiveness of the 25% of the Locality Fund being reserved for allocation by his central office rather than issued to Local Authorities?	Information will be provided for circulation to Panel members.

#### **47. Dates of Future Meetings and Work Programme**

The Secretary submitted proposed Panel meeting dates for the period to February 2021 explaining that the Work Programme for those meetings would need to be developed following the election of a new Commissioner in May 2020.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chairman thanked the Commissioner for his regular attendance and contributions at Panel meetings and wished him well in future ventures.

**RESOLVED** – That the dates future meetings be noted; the Work Programme to be developed in due course.

**Chairman**

## STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel

27 July 2020

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>COVID- 19 Pandemic - Community Recovery</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Mike Bowen - Portfolio Holder for Communities</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Mark Forrester - Head of Democratic &amp; Community Services</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>(All Wards);</b>

#### 1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The report outlines possible key social challenges and issues to consider in the recovery phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members discuss the issues raised in this report.
- 2.2 That, on the basis of the report and the contribution of Members, officers will engage with partner organisations to formulate a draft Covid-19 Community Recovery Plan.

#### 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has established an officer group to develop a Covid-19 recovery plan across a number of themes one of which is designated as 'community recovery'. The initial scoping brief for the theme includes:
- Developing an evidenced based understanding of the impact on our local communities,
  - Understanding and planning for the impact on the support services that we currently provide,
  - Providing support and coordination to the local voluntary sector, community groups and other partners,
  - Developing community cohesion in respect of the response.
- 3.2 Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the lives of people with some groups of people impacted more severely than others and this leaves a legacy that

requires a policy response. Similarly the potential impact in the next phase of lockdown easing, and longer term impact is likely to be felt unequally.

- 3.3 Impacts have been felt by older and vulnerable people, children and young people, working households and specific communities. These include impact on health, education, jobs and income, the local environment and services people access.
- 3.4 There have been positive developments, particularly the way in which people have stepped forward as volunteers and “good neighbours”. The voluntary sector has played a critical role in supporting people and the Council has formed a closer working relationship with key organisations.
- 3.5 The question is raised about what the key issues are that the Council should think about as part of ‘community recovery’, whether there are particular groups of people that need to be prioritised in the short and medium term, and what the opportunity might be to work differently with the voluntary sector and other partners.
- 3.6 A series of steps are suggested, including the development of a basket of indicators to track the impact of the pandemic over the long term, engagement with the voluntary sector, key statutory sector organisations and use of current formal partnerships to coordinate the community recovery work.

#### 4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Aim 1: To help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work.

#### 5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 The report is presented with the purpose of promoting discussion to inform the scope of planning Covid-19 community recovery. Members are recommended to have that discussion.

Neil Rodgers  
**Executive Director (Place)**

#### **Web Links and Background Papers**

#### **Contact details**

Mark Forrester  
Head of Democratic & Community Services  
mark.forrester@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk

#### 6. **Detail**

- 6.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has established an officer group to

develop a Covid-19 recovery plan across a number of themes one of which is designated as 'community recovery'. The initial scoping brief for the theme includes:

- Developing an evidenced based understanding of the impact on our local communities
- Understanding and planning for the impact on the support services that we currently provide
- Providing support and coordination to the local voluntary sector, community groups and other partners
- Developing community cohesion in respect of the response

7.2 The purpose of this report is to highlight a number of potential elements to include in the Council's development of a community recovery plan with the intention to provoke discussion and encourage the input of Members. Drafting of this report involved a light touch review of current national thinking alongside discussions with Council Officers, voluntary sector organisations involved in coordinating local community support and the initial discussions which are part of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum recovery planning.

7.3 The key challenges and opportunities.

It is a statement of the obvious that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the lives of people. It is also obvious that some groups of people have been impacted more severely than others and this leaves a legacy that requires a policy response. Similarly the potential impact in the next phase of lockdown easing, and longer term impact is likely to be unequally felt.

There are challenges ahead both as a legacy of what has happened and what we foresee happening but also potential opportunities and positive things that we can build on. The following are some initial ideas about the issues we need to consider:

7.3.1 Impact of lockdown on:

- Individuals – those who were shielded or advised to isolate, the wider 'vulnerable population' such as homeless people, people with poor mental health, children and young people.
- Children and Education - interrupted learning, social isolation and parental/carer stress. The impact on disadvantaged and vulnerable children; with limited access to online learning, accommodation that does not lend itself to learning, parents/carers less willing or able to help. There may be long-term impacts on positive engagement in education and absenteeism. When not in school, research suggests children are physically less active, have longer screen time, irregular sleep patterns, and less favourable diets. With the long absence from school these behaviours are likely to become more pronounced.

- Households – reduced incomes, relationship pressures, loneliness and loss of social contact, health issue – concerns about increased alcohol consumption.
- Services – access to public services reduced or switched to ‘on-line’, some voluntary sector support services reduced or stopped, there has been a growth of informal ‘good neighbour’ volunteering, new mutual aid groups and new volunteers.
- Social opportunities – loneliness and loss of social contact, stopping of recreational, sport, cultural opportunities, new on line groups and virtual community events.
- Health - The NHS is facing a mounting backlog of non-Covid patients whose treatments have been delayed. Preventative services and management of some existing long-term conditions has been put on hold. Delays in diagnosis and treatment are likely to impact on mortality rates. Some people have embraced changes and exercised more and quit smoking. Whilst conversely there are reports of increasing alcohol consumption and weight gain.
- Environment – increased in fly tipping, increased use of local green spaces.
- Crime - new forms of ASB (breaking lockdown), concerns about increased child sexual abuse and domestic abuse
- Leadership – many councillors have been active in local support groups and actively reporting local problems.
- New working relationship - partnership with key local voluntary and community groups and statutory agencies, switch to virtual meetings.

### 7.3.2 The current post lockdown phase

- Vulnerable people who need to continue a level of isolating or who feel afraid or less able to leave the house. Some of the informal ‘good neighbour’ support could fall away as volunteers return to work. As some social groups and other face to face social support won’t immediately pick up levels of social isolation and associated health problems could increase for this group of people.
- Increased poverty as a result of lost jobs and income, poor economic opportunity for young people, homelessness. (and associated problems – health, educational achievement, crime)
- Rural communities and neighbourhoods impacted by sudden significant increase in visitor numbers – with amenities (pubs, toilets etc.) not yet open or more limited. There is a degree of local resentment at the behaviour and number of visitors to certain locations.

- Crime and antisocial behaviour – there are concerns with pubs opening, but in more limited fashion, that there will be a spike in ASB.
- Legacy of mental health issues, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse.
- Social Cohesion – will new volunteers and groups continue or transform to address new issues. How do community and volunteer run services and facilities reopen (village halls, friendship groups, sports clubs etc.)?
- The level of demand for our services or those we work with – advice services for example could expect to see increased demand, demand on food banks has been increasing.

### 7.3.3 Medium term

- A key positive from the pandemic has been the surge in volunteering and social action. Existing and new mutual aid groups have been critical to the covid-19 response - small local groups, supporting one another, and their community. The vital role of charities and community groups has also been highlighted; having been the first line of support for some of our most vulnerable residents. However funding streams for key voluntary groups have been threatened with cuts and with public sector finance under significant pressure the long-term sustainability of the sector is at risk.
- Jobs, Employment and Poverty – There have been dire predictions about a return to 1980's levels of unemployment. The pandemic has and will continue to affect the poorest in society the most both in terms of being more likely to experience worse health outcomes from Covid-19, and from increased economic and social hardship during the lockdown, and during the economic fallout. Nationally there has been the largest spike in unemployment on record; research shows that such job loss is associated with increased depression, anxiety, distress, and low self-esteem and may lead to higher rates of substance use, domestic abuse, child neglect and suicide. The economic fallout could have persistent health effects; initial estimates suggest a 1% fall in employment could lead to around a 2% increase in the prevalence of chronic illness and it is likely to disproportionately impact those from less affluent backgrounds.
- National Policy – The Government's policy response in relation to economic regeneration and social programmes will be critical. Recent Government announcements have focused on economic recovery but if that recovery is not quick and the problems associated with poverty and deprivation become entrenched then significant social programmes are also likely to be needed. We need to be in a position to work with whatever policy response and associated financial support may be forthcoming.
- Towards a 'Green recovery' – encouraging new patterns of living, tackling climate change and a greater appreciation and more active volunteering in support of the natural environment.

- Our local voluntary and community sector – A review of the Council’s community support arrangements is already a corporate priority. There is now a new context for this review and consideration of whether the Council can strengthen its partnership and encourage an increased role and capacity for the voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Community priorities – given the major impact of Covid-19 on so many aspects of daily life the Council may need to consider whether community priorities have changed and whether expectations and attitudes to public services have changed.
- Commemoration – celebration: Will it be appropriate at some point to think about marking the events of the past year. The losses and the gains, the role of community volunteers.

#### 7.4 The Council’s response

A range of service responses have been delivered to support the local community through the Covid-19 crisis. Partnership via the Local Resilience Forum has been an important part of the response. In the context of community support and the future it is worth noting the way in which the Council has formed a close working relationship with the local voluntary and community sector. At the heart of that relationship has been the regular meetings and coordination of effort with Support Staffordshire, the Council and the three organisations (designated lead organisations with Staffordshire County Council) - Homelink, Biddulph Youth and Community Zone, and Haregate Community Centre. The Council provided a grant of £5,000 to each of these three organisations to help them undertake their community support role during a time when their usual source of income had been lost).

Councillors and Parish Councils have provided information on the community groups and initiatives which quickly established to support vulnerable people in their local communities.

The local voluntary and community sector has played an absolutely critical role in supporting people through this first stage of the Covid-19 crisis. Through the meetings with Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council the issue of future community need, ‘recovery’ and how we work together has been raised.

#### 7.5 Target Groups

In organising a coordinated response during the next phase and medium term do we need to focus on particular groups of people and their needs?

- Older People/vulnerable - isolation and mental health
- Young people – worklessness and its long term impact.
- Working age families – poverty and its impact on health and wellbeing, domestic abuse, crime and ASB where poverty is concentrated.

Will we need to focus in particular places – could problems for our poorest neighbourhoods be compounded and so do we need a neighbourhood approach not just an individual/socio-demographic group approach?

## 7.6 Organisation

The voluntary and community sector has been critical in the first phase of response. There have been more volunteers, including more informal neighbour support, additional resources, including funding, have been used to address the challenges.

Do we need to renew our relationship and formal partnership structures to work with the voluntary sector on the challenges ahead? Can we help sustain the new voluntary effort?

The Biddulph Youth and Community Zone, Hargeate Community Centre and Moorlands Homelink have acted as key 'anchor organisations' – key characteristics of these are organisations: they have paid staff and formal systems of management and governance, they have a broad beneficial purpose (not just one demographic client group) they have premises, they have an ability to work in partnership with others, they have networks with many other voluntary and community organisations and are trusted. Is the partnership we have something we can build on as we seek to meet the challenges ahead.?

Do we need to think about, develop and share the value base that informs activity going forward. So for example think about the difference between voluntary activity which (1) has people as the passive recipients of other people's 'charity' or which (2) engages people as participants in community life.

## 7.7 Themes

Are there some key themes or areas of voluntary /community sector action:

- Good neighbours – building community
- Food – without other significant policy changes we can expect to see an increased demand on food banks, community cafés
- Digital inclusion – access and helping people to develop confidence and skills.

## 7.8 Steps

- Engage Members – to help scope the issues we should focus on and the potential at community level.
- Develop a basket of indicators and intelligence to track the impact on our community of the pandemic over time and to inform our actions. It is proposed to form a basket of indicators drawn from externally available data, data generated from the Council's Services and that available from partners –such as the Health Service, County Council, CAB, and Foodbanks.

- Explore with key people/organisations the possibilities. (Support Staffordshire, the 'anchor organisations', the wider voluntary sector engagement and consultation, County Council and health service).
- Gain a broad agreement about the focus of our efforts and the underpinning values and approach.
- Engage with partner organisations in the recovery phase – County Council, Health Service and Police Service – through the established partnership structures (Resilience Forum, Community safety Partnership).