

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2020

PRESENT: Councillor T McNicol (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: J Aberley, G Bentley, G Heath, I Herdman, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, J T Jones, K Martin, T McNicol, T Riley, P Roberts, L Swindlehurst, P Taylor, R Ward and N Yates

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor I Plant, M Bowen, S Scalise, J Porter, M A Deaville, M Gledhill and E Fallows

APOLOGIES: Councillors D Shaw and P Wood

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

There were none.

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

DECIDED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on the 5th October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18 **TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL.**

DECIDED: That the minutes from the last meeting of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel be **NOTED**.

19 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

Agenda No.	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda Item 8 – Early Outcomes Fund Project	Cllr K. Martin	Other – Works with the Early Intervention Team.
Agenda Item 7 – Police, Fire & Rescue Crime Annual Update	Cllr G. Bentley	Other – Fire and Rescue Service Volunteer.

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	Cllr J. Porter	Other – Member of the Staffordshire Moorlands Safer Neighbourhood Panel.
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20 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY.**

Question received from Councillor Swindlehurst:

“At Leek Town Council General Purposes Committee, Councillors discussed the issue of homelessness and temporary accommodation. The question was raised about the plans that began in 2018 to renovate No 3, The Villas, (having been empty for many years), for the provision of temporary accommodation for vulnerable people. Despite some work having been undertaken, the accommodation remains unused for this proposed purpose and has begun to deteriorate once again. This is a crucial time in relation to the spread of Covid-19, with research to suggest rough sleepers and sofa-surfers to be potentially vulnerable, and by sharing multiple accommodations be a risk related to spread. My question is, has this project been shelved, and if so, where and why was this agreed?”

Response from Councillor Bowen – Portfolio Holder for Communities:

Some works had started, however, there were unforeseen difficulties with the utilities and supply. When the pandemic hit in March, the limited resources of the Housing Team had to be redirected to placing rough sleepers; most of whom are single. The property was to be for families and happily, we haven’t seen the predicted increase in domestic violence etc. so the current temporary accommodation provision has been sufficient. It made sense to mothball this project until such time as it became needed and resource could be directed.

I have to say that workload, especially given the Tiers and subsequent lockdown has stretched the Team to capacity and beyond and is a testament to their commitment and dedication that we have managed to exceed Government expectations in our work with rough sleepers.

By way of supplementary questions, Councillor Swindlehurst asked about the housing of single people and raised the national issue of increased domestic violence. It was confirmed that the Council’s Housing Team would do its utmost to provide accommodation for any person found in need of housing. Domestic violence campaigns for both men and women had taken place and any person listed on the housing register which was a victim of domestic violence had been contacted by the Council.

21 **POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND CRIME ANNUAL UPDATE - MATTHEW ELLIS, STAFFORDSHIRE COMMISSIONER & GLYNN DIXON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE. (PRESENTATION)**

Matthew Ellis – Staffordshire Commissioner was present to provide the Panel with its annual update. Firstly, he advised members that the figures around domestic violence varied widely across the county and a cross agency piece of work had recently been commissioned to review the national picture.

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Overall, the level of crime in the Moorlands had reduced, however, in Cheadle an increase had been seen and the Inspector had put measures in place to improve the situation there. Crime related to drugs was low and anti-social behaviour also remained a problem in some areas of the district.

The Panel was informed that investment in the Police Force was necessary and a significant number of Police Officers were being recruited.

Discussion took place around the role of the Safer Neighbourhood Panel and Policing during the pandemic, drug related crime in Cheadle, non-molestation orders, safe and well checks and enforcement of non-compliance of Covid-19 regulations.

The Commissioner would provide a response to the following subject areas after the meeting:-

1. Outcome of the work commissioned to review domestic violence (expected in 3 months);
2. Figures for the crimes recorded in Cheadle, particularly around drugs and domestic violence;
3. Clarity around alleged costs for non-molestation orders;
4. Figures on the number of Safe and Well checks carried out by the Fire Service;
5. Information on the latest recruitment drive to increase the number of female officers and people from different ethnic groups being employed.

The Chair thanked Matthew Ellis for attending the meeting.

DECIDED: That the update be received.

22 **EARLY OUTCOMES FUND PROJECT.**

The Early Outcomes Fund Project aimed to develop a range of strategies and initiatives that would improve children's speech, language and communication in the Early Years. Members received a presentation which gave details on workforce training, early communication champions, screening tool training, funded early years Level 3 SENCO Training, initial findings and recommendations.

The Panel were very pleased with the work carried out by the Early Outcomes Team and found the presentation very informative. Discussion took place around referrals to speech and language therapists and the long term benefits of early intervention and support for children.

The officers were thanked for attending the meeting.

DECIDED: That the presentation be NOTED.

23 **WILDFIRE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER**

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David Smith – Principal Officer Communities and Partnerships, introduced a report which set out measures to reduce the risk of wildfires in high risk areas of the District

The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 gave local authorities the power to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to control behaviours in a public place, which had caused or may cause a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality and would likely to be of a continuing or persistent nature and were therefore unreasonable.

Moorlands fires or wildfires could have a range of impacts including loss of life and property, damage to wildlife and biodiversity, carbon loss, loss of grazing land, and damage to water catchments and supplies. The financial cost of wildfires could also be substantial.

The introduction of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) by the District Council could help to reduce the occurrence of wildfires by prohibiting the lighting of fires, barbecues, fireworks and Chinese (sky) lanterns. In addition, the Council could work with partners to raise awareness of the risks of wildfires and to encourage people to behave responsibly.

Members fully supported the introduction of a PSPO and would have liked the measures to include residential areas. Members shared their concerns in relation to fireworks, enforcement and asked if there had been any co-ordination with neighbouring authorities and if the order could include land owned by parish councils.

In response, David Smith advised that it would be difficult for the measures to be introduced if the land was not in the Council' ownership. The new PSPO would be launched with an advertising campaign and officers would patrol areas at times known to be problematic. A similar order had been discussed with High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council would be contacted. Parish Councils would need to give their permission for their land to be included in the order and evidence that there had been a detrimental impact on their land. Cabinet could then consider such requests.

DECIDED:

The Panel **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- 1) Cabinet agreed to carry out the necessary consultation, publication and notification in relation to the draft Order appended to the report;
- 2) Cabinet subsequently approves the draft Order by Delegated Cabinet Decision unless the responses from the consultation necessitate material changes to the draft Order.

24 **WORK PROGRAMME**

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

At this point of the meeting, members of the Panel gave their best wishes to Councillor Shaw, Chair of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

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DECIDED: That the Work Programme for 2020-21 be agreed.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified

_____ Chairman _____ Date