

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 12 JULY 2021

PRESENT: Councillor D Shaw (Chair)

Councillors I Herdman, T Holmes, B A Hughes, A Hulme,
B Johnson, T Riley, P Roberts, L Swindlehurst, P Taylor, R Ward
and N Yates

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C J S Atkins, I Plant, M Bowen, M Gledhill, N Hawkins,
K J Jackson, J Porter, S E Ralphs MBE, S Scalise and P Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Aberley, K Hoptroff and K Martin

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

Councillor Atkins was substitute member for Councillor Hoptroff and Councillor Plant was substitute member for Councillor Martin.

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

DECIDED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on the 21st June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

Councillor Atkins raised an urgent item of business in relation to the cancellation of Leek Show.

The Leader explained to the Panel that as a responsible land owner and due to the rates of positive covid infections, the Council had not given permission for the Show to be held at Birchall Playing Fields.

Apparently, the event organisers had found an alternative venue at a site in Longsden. The local covid outbreak in Leek was highlighted and there were a number of health and safety matters which the organisers would need to address, before the Council could give consent for the Show to be held on its land. The show would attract visitors from many parts of the Country.

Cllr Atkins agreed with the danger that Covid-19 posed and the requirement for prevention measures to be in place. She was concerned that the event had been publicised, tickets sold and a lack of communication between the Council and event organisers. It was queried whether there was a fee to use the site and if the permission had been refused to allow the Council to develop the football pitch in conjunction with a planning application.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 12 July 2021

Members were assured that there was no connection with the refusal to use Birchall Playing Fields and the planning application for Ball Haye Green Football Club. A fee was paid to the Council for the use of the field which included complimentary advertising. There had not been a breakdown in communication and this event had been held for many years without any issues. Officers had assisted, offered alternative solutions for the Show to proceed and had negotiated with the Show organisers as much as possible.

The Council was not responsible for notifying businesses, sponsors or the public of the cancellation of the event.

53 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

No interests were declared.

54 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL.**

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

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

There were none.

56 **YOUR HOUSING GROUP REGULAR PERFORMANCE UPDATE.**

Members considered a briefing paper introduced by Sharon Wheeler – Regional Housing Manager South, which provided a performance and development update on YHG business areas identified in the legacy agreement and related to business activity between April 2020 and March 2021. Aaron Hamersley – Head of Housing Management, Dave Lovatt – Compliance and Facilities Manager and Paula Marshall Director of Housing and Customer Service was also present at the meeting, along with two customer representatives; Cheryl Ballan and Andrea Hampton. Apologies were received from George Wallace.

Topics covered within the report included:

- Your Housing Group Response to Covid 19
- Housing Management
- Neighbourhood inspection and Customer Engagement Events
- Lettings
- Compliance
- Development
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Asset improvement
- Digital Engagement
- Community Regeneration

YHG were in the process of a review and restructure of its housing management customer operation model. This would introduce an enhanced regional approach to tenancy and housing management, tenancy enforcement and allocations to provide a more collaborative approach, enabling colleagues to improve their relationship with customers and better understand the needs of local neighbourhoods. Members were

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 12 July 2021

pleased to learn about the reintroduction of the Customer Engagement events and the new regional customer operating model.

The Panel was advised that Dave Lovatt would provide the performance update to members in the future as Sharon Wheeler had been appointed to a new safeguarding and tenancy support role within the organisation. The new team would assist customers that required more intensive dedicated support to enable them to sustain their tenancies. The Chair requested for an update on this to be included in the next regular performance report and Sharon was thanked for the support she had provided to members over the years.

Members commented and raised the following points:-

Cars parked dangerously on Mill Street/Hamil Drive, Leek – Planning permission was being sought to change the layout of the frontage of Mill Street to allow a one-way, short stay parking facility which would encourage more commercial customers and deter residential customers car parking throughout the day.

YHG asset map – It wasn't possible for this to be provided as the document would be too large, complicated and ever changing. A schedule of ground maintenance had been previously circulated to members and if there were any areas of concern these should be reported for investigation on a case by case basis.

Number of newly built properties and an update on Lightwood in Cheadle – The Development Team would provide the number of units built and an update on the Lightwood site after the meeting.

Housing repairs and renewals – In response to a query in relation to repairs, Officers explained that there had been a reduced service between Jan to March due to the pandemic. However, the General Repairs service had now resumed and was up to date. Paula Marshall suggested that an officer from the Asset Management and Repairs Team could attend a future meeting to provide a more detailed update on repairs and renewals. Customer satisfaction for the in-house repairs service had increased from 67 % to 88%, as at the end of March this year. One of the customer representatives also gave assurance that customers had noted an improved level of customer satisfaction.

Daisy Hays – Councillor Atkins was very concerned about a number of major outstanding maintenance issues at this relatively new site and the affect this had on the residents. Service charge fees had increased, the shared ownership scheme for the flats was complicated and communication with the residents was poor. YHG was hugely disappointed that a new building required such a large amount of repair which included major works to the roof. The Council had been involved with the mixed tenure scheme offered at Daisy Hays and the scheme was standard practice for such properties. There were a number of vacant flats to enable residents to temporarily reside in whilst their bathrooms and kitchens were upgraded.

A date for the completion of works and an update on the garden area would be provided after the meeting. Once restrictions were lifted, a meeting for residents would be arranged which Leek Councillors wished to be involved with.

A member of the Panel suggested that regular surgeries should be arranged as part of the neighbourhood inspections and highlighted the importance of the

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 12 July 2021

organisation's responsibility to mitigate climate change by ensuring homes were future proofed or retro-fitted. YHG had an Environmental Strategy and would attend a meeting of the Climate Change Working Group to present its plans to address climate change or include details at the next regular performance update.

The Chair thanked the Officers and Customer Representatives their attendance.

DECIDED: That the update be noted.

57 **UPDATE ON THE LEVELS OF POLLUTION AND THE AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN.**

The Panel considered a report which provided an update on the latest Air Quality data across the Staffordshire Moorlands and the measures being proposed or undertaken in relation to the declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Leek and Cellarhead, as part of the Air Quality Action Plan for the Areas.

In accordance with the Council's statutory duty to manage air quality in the District, monitoring of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) was completed across the District during 2019. In general, the monitoring confirmed that NO₂ annual mean concentrations generally showed a slight downward trend, decreasing at 60% of the sites from the previous year.

Once adjusted to be representative of a location of relevant exposure, only three exceedances of the Air Quality Objective (40µg/m³) were recorded and all three were located in the existing Air Quality Management Area in Cellarhead, with the highest reading recorded to be 41.9µg/m³.

There were no exceedances of the Air Quality Objective in AQMA No1: Leek. Full details of the air quality results were contained in the Annual Status Report 2020 (attached at Appendix 2 of the report).

Despite the difficulties presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, continued monitoring of NO₂ was completed across the District during 2020. No exceedances of the Air Quality Objectives were seen at any location across the District in 2020, including in the two declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in Leek and Cellarhead.

A member of the Panel expected there to be more of a reduction in emissions due to the pandemic and requested for the air quality data table to include the locations rather than grid references.

Members made suggestions for the improvement of air quality such as; the introduction of a 20 is plenty scheme, improved walking routes to school, car parks within close proximity of schools, park and walk schemes and use of leisure centre car parks. It was the opinion of some councillors that serious re-engineering of the junction at Cellarhead was needed. Others explained that it wasn't possible to have a right turn filter lane/light as there wasn't enough space for two lanes and that parking wasn't available at the school.

Alicia Patterson - Head of Environmental Health, agreed this was a challenging area for the District and advised that a trial was taking place at this junction which would provide real time air quality data with peak times taken into account.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 12 July 2021

The next report would include the physical locations and the suggestions were noted for discussion at future discussions with partners.

Discussion took place in relation to the significant measures required to reduce the amount of traffic in Leek town centre. Members were assured that SMDC worked extensively with its partners with the common aim to improve air quality. Work was being undertaken to look at alternative routes but to also ensure the traffic wasn't dispersed elsewhere in the area.

DECIDED: That the Panel noted the content of the report.

58 WORK PROGRAMME

The Leader gave details of the Kick Start Scheme (funding for employers to provide work placement for 16-24 year olds at risk of long-term unemployment). Project Officers had offered to attend a meeting of the Panel to provide full details of the scheme.

The Panel considered its Work Programme and agreed the items listed, subject to the addition of the following items:-

- Kick Start Scheme
- Management Plan for green spaces managed and maintained by SMDC

DECIDED: That the Work Programme for 2021-22 be agreed.

The meeting closed at 7.45 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date