

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT: Councillor N Podmore (Chair)

Councillors S Ellis, B Emery, K Flunder, A Hart, I Herdman,
G Lockett, I J Lucas, D Price, P Roberts, H Sheldon MBE, R Ward
and C Wood

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors:- A Forrester – Portfolio Holder for Environment
D Ogden – Cabinet Support Member
B Johnson

APOLOGIES: Councillors C J S Atkins, J Bull, T McNicol and J Redfern

19 **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS.**

There were no substitute members.

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

DECIDED – That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on 18 July 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

21 **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS.**

There were none.

22 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

No declarations of interest were made.

23 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.**

There were none.

24 **UPDATE ON THE COUNTRYSIDE AND PARKS MANAGEMENT REVIEW
(PRESENTATION) - NICOLA KEMP - OPERATIONS MANAGER
(CONTRACT MANAGEMENT).**

Nicola Kemp, Operations Manager (Contract Management), gave a presentation to the Panel which provided an update on the management transfer of the Council's Countryside Sites. The slides included:-

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- Background
- Heads of Terms
- Responsibilities remaining with the SMDC
- Progress so Far

Councillor Chris Wood felt that the 30 year lease with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) was too long a time period and thought that the District Council should be involved with any discussions with the SWT, rather than direct contact between Biddulph Town Council and Friends of Biddulph Grange Country Park. It was explained that a 30 year lease was standard practice and that there would be break clauses and reviews of the contract at year 1 and year 5. Biddulph Town Council and the Friends of Biddulph Grange Country Park (who had expressed an interest in operating the visitor centre at Biddulph Grange Country Park) had agreed to liaise directly with SWT regarding any arrangements for the centre due to the transfer timeframes.

Councillor Lockett was given assurance that Ladderedge Country Park would continue to be managed and maintained as it had been previously done so by members of Council staff.

Issues around communication and Marshes Hill Common were highlighted by Councillor Flunder. Nicola Kemp explained that it was a site of special scientific interest and she had tried to contact the Parish Council regarding this matter. The Council was willing to work with Brown Edge Parish Council and include this site in the proposals with SWT.

Queries were also raised around freehold rights at Wetley Moor and if a financial contribution from Stoke City Council had been agreed. There were no plans to stop sales of land at present and a financial agreement with Stoke City Council had not yet been confirmed.

Finally, the Panel discussed the wording and phrases within legal documentation relating to the contract with SWT.

DECIDED: That the presentation be noted.

25

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE COUNCILS STRATEGY FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT.

The Panel considered an update report and presentation on the progress on the first year delivery of Council's Strategy for Physical Activity and Sport. David Stock - Principal Officer, Leisure and Recreation, introduced the presentation which covered the following topics:-

- Background Assessments
- Target Groups
- Young People
- Place Base Approach – Haregate
- Maximising the Outdoors
- Support for Voluntary Clubs
- Ongoing Developments

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Councillor Wood was of the opinion that although some work had been carried out in Biddulph East, the majority of projects were in Leek and Cheadle. Councillor Roberts raised the point that Biddulph didn't have a Sports Council and there had been little attendance from representatives in Biddulph in the past.

Discussion took place around adult gym equipment in parks and the potential benefits of such equipment. This would be looked into and a local need would have to be identified for this suggestion to go ahead. Councillor Emery advised the Panel that 'Action West End' was currently carrying out consultation in relation to adult gym equipment at the Westwood Recreational area in Leek.

Members were pleased that the skate park at Brough Park was going to be updated but raised various concerns about the Leisure Centre at this site. In particular, members were concerned about the cleanliness of the café, floors and changing areas. A suggestion was made that the membership tariffs should be reviewed, as currently only a flat tariff was available which didn't suit all circumstances. The Panel felt that all of the leisure centres in the Moorlands were no longer fit for purpose and were all in need of investment and ambitious plans. It was suggested that David Stock was invited to a meeting of Leek Town Council.

David Stock confirmed that he would look into the complaints received at Brough Park Leisure Centre and would contact the Contracts Manager in relation to the operational issues identified by the Panel.

Safety concerns were raised in relation to The Paddock play area in Biddulph as the area was regularly vandalised. The Edgerton Centre in Blythe Bridge was also mentioned as there were issues here too which required attention. The Open Spaces Audit identified the areas most in need of improvement and this would be looked into after the meeting.

Councillors praised various sports projects such as the play area at Halls Road, and the Bowling Club in Biddulph, the new play equipment and pitch at Upper Tean and the improvements to recreation grounds in Cheadle.

DECIDED: That the report and presentation be noted.

26

WORK PROGRAMME.

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

- Alliance Environmental Services (Phase 3)
- Leisure Contract

DECIDED: That the Panel's Work Programme for 2018/19 be agreed, subject to the above additions to the programme.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

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_____Chairman _____Date