

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2020

PRESENT: Councillor R Ward (Chair)

Councillors J Davies, B Emery, A Hart, N Hawkins, I Herdman, K Hoptroff, L Page, H Plimley, D Price, P Roberts and J Salt.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C J S Atkins, B Cawley, B Johnson, L A Malyon, J Porter, S E Ralphs MBE, P Routledge, S Scalise, L Swindlehurst, E Wain and P Wood.

APOLOGIES: Councillors G Bentley, C Brady, P Elkin, K Flunder, J Redfern and H Sheldon MBE.

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

At this point of the meeting, Cllr Hoptroff clarified that the recommendations made by the Panel in relation to the changes to the terms of conditions of the markets had been considered and taken into account by Cabinet.

DECIDED – That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on 20 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

There were no urgent items of business.

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

The following members substituted:-

- Councillor Malyon for Councillor Bentley
- Councillor Swindlehurst for Councillor Brady
- Councillor Wood for Councillor Elkin.

99 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:-**

No declarations of interest were made.

100 **EDUCATION AND MEDIA STRATEGY FOR DOG FOULING.
(PRESENTATION/VERBAL UPDATE)**

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At the request of a member of the Panel, David Smith – Principal Officer, Communities and Partnerships, outlined the publicity and communication carried out by the Council in relation to dog fouling.

The Council had to demonstrate that reasonable steps were taken to make dog owners aware of their responsibilities which included signage, cards and stencilling around the district. Information was available on the website which incorporated a copy of the Dog Control Order which set out where it was an offence to allow a dog to foul.

Press releases were done periodically and were mainly issued following enforcement action.

Members were provided with cards which were used during a dog watch campaign. The cards were posted to residents where dog fouling had been highlighted as a problem in the area and provided details of the associated illnesses, the reporting methods available and the cost of fixed penalty notices. The Enforcement Team would also work in partnership with schools to raise the profile of dog fouling, carry out patrols and install additional signage.

It was the opinion of a member that this approach to reduce dog fouling worked well in towns but that it was more difficult to tackle the problem in rural areas. The Officer agreed that as the rural areas covered such large amounts of land and during darker nights, it was more difficult to deal with reports of dog fouling.

A member asked for the statistical information on the number of offences reported and successful prosecutions. David Smith advised the Panel that 5 fixed penalty notices had been issued this year, plus one prosecution, and for the previous year, 3 fixed penalties had been issued. The figures for the reported instances of dog fouling offences would be provided after the meeting.

As there was only one Enforcement Officer, the importance of patrolling hot spot areas at specific times when fouling occurred was explained to the Panel.

A Cabinet member thought that the level of the fine should be increased and in response, the Officer explained that the levels of fines were set by legislation but Courts were able to fine higher amounts of up to £1000.

Discussion took place around repeat offenders, gathering evidence, the likelihood of being caught by an Enforcement Officer, time patrols took place, dog waste bags in trees along the Rudyard Trail and how farm livestock could be affected by dog fouling.

David Smith agreed to arrange for an Officer to attend a meeting of Action West End and for a site visit to take place at an area in Endon where there was a particular problem. It was also suggested that Parish Councils could assist if they were provided with posters/ stickers and the social media references on the problem area dog fouling card required updating.

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

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

Question from Councillor Hoptroff:

Q1. Can we please have a full update on the refurbishment of the bus station toilets? The contract was awarded in November 2019 but as of yet the project hasn't commenced. When will these works start and be completed and as promised will the extended opening hours of the disabled toilet be implemented on a trial period ?

Response:

An order has been raised on 26th November 2019 with Roy Wright & Co Ltd for the refurbishment of the Smithfield Centre WCs. Officers attended a pre-start meeting on 8th January as a meeting for early December had to be re-arranged due to sickness of the contractor. The contractors then entered a two week "shut-down" over Christmas and the New Year.

At the prestart meeting it was noted that the flooring sub-contractor had raised concerns about doing the works at this time of year due to the risk of the floor covering failing due to colder temperatures and that works should and will therefore commence on 24th February 2020. They will be complete by 17th April 2020.

The scope of the project includes that the external doors will be switched to a timed-door entry management system so there will be the facility to extend the opening times of the disabled WCs to much later as required. The toilets will be cleaned daily during normal working hours.

By way of supplementary questions, Councillor Hoptroff requested for the wording of disabled toilets to be amended to accessible toilets and for the Panel to be kept updated on the progress of the refurbishment.

Question from Councillor Page:

Q2. In response to the recent decision to refuse to hold a consultation on the future of the Leek Trestle Market at Full Council can the Service Delivery and Scrutiny Panel be provided with the meeting date, agenda and minutes of when this council's asset was discussed at Cabinet. Please can the web link also be provided for the publicly available minutes of this meeting?

Response:

Members of Cabinet have established the principle for the future usage of the Trestle Market building. We have still to decide on the design, cost, installation of stalls etc. in the building.

Councillor Page advised, that members of the public had requested the date of the meeting at which the fixed stalls were discussed and the link from the website to the minutes of this meeting.

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He also asked if it would be possible to receive the forecast of costs for refurbishment of the Trestle Market and if there was any intention to sell the market.

Councillor Ralphs responded to the effect, that the date of the meeting and the minutes did not exist as the meetings on the subject had not yet taken place.

The refurbishment of the Trestle Market was planned in two tranches:-

1. To repair the exterior of the building, heating, lighting etc. which was now complete;
2. To refurbish the inside of the building.

A detailed report would be prepared and considered by Cabinet towards the end of March 2020. Following this, the report would then be considered by the relevant Scrutiny Panel.

The commencement of works to the Market Hall could be delayed to enable the Scooter Fest and the event planned for V.E Day to take place in there. This would be the last opportunity for these types of events to take place in this location.

Members were sceptical that the decision to install permanent stalls had not already been made and referred to the notice of motion which had been lost at the meeting of Full Council the previous week. The Leader confirmed that it was a concept at this stage, a report was to be drafted and a decision would then be made. Assurance was given that any decisions could be called-in and there were no plans to sell the market. Cabinet members wished to listen to additional ideas from members and traders However, some members of the Panel felt that a wider consultation of the proposals for the market should take place and suggested that a full public meeting should be held. Members were reminded that Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings were open meetings which the public could attend.

A member of the Panel referred to the markets in Altrincham and Shrewsbury and requested assurance that the types of stalls in these towns, along with the footfall would be looked into, to ensure that the success of these markets could be replicated in Leek. The Panel was informed that this was an opportunity to enhance the market, encourage younger people and traders had requested better accommodation.

102 **FUTURE OF LEEK TRESTLE MARKET. (VERBAL UPDATE)**

This matter was discussed as part of the Questions to Portfolio Holders (Agenda Item 6).

103 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel considered its Work Programme and agreed the items listed, subject to, an update on the letter sent to the Government in relation to affordable housing/stalled housing being added.

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

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The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

_____Chairman _____Date