

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Questions to Portfolio Holders

### Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 22 July 2020

#### **1. Question Received from Councillor Hoptroff**

“How are the Disabled Facility Grants being used to promote independent living at home for those with disabilities?”

#### **Response:**

“Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG’s as commonly known) are used for 2 primary purposes; for the funding of mandatory applications for adaptations to assist the applicant to remain living independently in their own home, and for funding discretionary schemes where the budget allows to help individuals with disabilities to move to more suitable accommodation or to provide access for the wider disabled community to community facilities where no such provision currently exists.

To facilitate this, the Council work with other Staffordshire Authorities and the County Council, in partnership with our service provider Millbrook Healthcare, to ensure that our residents can access suitable care advice and where required obtain suitable funding for necessary adaptations to their home. The scheme is promoted through the District and County Councils, and directly by Millbrook Healthcare, to try and reach the widest possible groups of people.

Through the partnership, applicants can access a wide range of adaptations, from ramps and external alterations to level access showers, specialist toilets and baths, stair-lifts, through-floor lifts and even property extensions to accommodate their needs.”

#### **2. Question received from Councillor Brady**

“In view of the financial support Parkwood Community Leisure has received from SMDC during the lockdown, what talks have been held with Parkwood to initiate outdoor fitness activities over the summer months and what activities are now being held to promote family physical wellbeing throughout the Staffordshire Moorlands.”

#### **Response:**

“Parkwood have undertaken some initial customer consultation via their Facebook pages to understand what level of interest there might be, following a positive response they are including plans for such sessions ready for such the centres to reopen. Government and national governing body guidance must be fully considered when planning such activities to ensure the safety of participants.

With regards other work promoting physical activity and sport, the Council has supported over 20 different community organisations, clubs and groups in the Moorlands during lockdown to access more than £200,000 external funding to help

them survive and plan for the future. We have also recently submitted further funding applications amounting to approximately £15,000 in partnership with three community organisations to offer additional support to them over the next 6 months. In addition, government guidance now enables sports to restart on 25th July and we are supporting clubs where possible to re-establish sessions where it is safe to do so.”

### **3. Question received from Councillor Atkins:**

“Effective Enforcement is important to maintain public confidence in the Planning service” It is recommended that Planning Authorities should publish a local enforcement plan. Do we have one and how can the public access it?

#### **Response:**

“Yes, the Council does have an enforcement plan which was adopted by the Planning Applications committee for a trial period. That period has now ended and we will be bringing a report back recommending formal adoption shortly. A copy of the plan can be obtained from the Department. Once it has been permanently adopted it will be placed on the website.”

### **4. Question received from Councillor Atkins:**

The Council have published a list of information required in planning applications and the N.P.P.F requires decisions to be made as quickly as possible ; if applicants are uncooperative and despite reminders fail to provide necessary details is it reasonable to take two years trying to determine an application for an unauthorised development that is causing environmental problems for neighbours?

#### **Response:**

“Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that the LPA should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Refusing an application for unauthorised development does not rectify the problem and whether it would be expedient to enforce would be a separate decision and may also not ultimately rectify the issue. It is generally regarded that working proactively with developers to regularise breaches is preferable to formal enforcement proceedings and achieves better outcomes in the long run.”