

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 27 JULY 2020

PRESENT: Councillor D Shaw (Chair)

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

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C J S Atkins, M Bowen, M Gledhill, T Holmes, K J Jackson, L A Malyon, L Page, I Plant, J Porter, P Routledge and I Whitehouse.

APOLOGIES: Councillors R Ward

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

DECIDED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on the 2nd February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2 **MINUTES FROM THE LAST 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**.

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

There were none.

4 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

Agenda No.	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda Item 7 – Covid-19 Pandemic – Community Recovery	Cllr P. Routledge	Other – Employed by Morrison's Supermarket.

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

1. Question received from Councillor Hoptroff

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 27 July 2020

“What personal responsibility do District Councillors have under the Equality Act 2010 to counter racism and promote diversity in their actions, statements and behaviour?”

Response:

The Equality Act 2010 Act provides the basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions; premises; work; education; associations, and transport.

The general equality duty set out in the Equality Act as it relates to the Council (as a corporate body) says that it must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

The Equality Act duty is placed on the Council rather than individual councillors. However, the Council's code of conduct is consistent with the seven principles of public life and requires councillors, when acting in their capacity as a Member of the Council, to:

- Provide leadership to the authority and communities within its area, by personal example and
- Respect others and not bully (including any unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated or offended) any person

By way of supplementary questions, Councillor Hoptroff wished to know what action the Council would take in response to any racist or sexist social media posts made by members. Mark Trillo – Executive Director (People) and Monitoring Officer, advised that any complaints received would be dealt with in accordance with the arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Hoptroff also referred to alleged comments made by Councillor Ralphs at the recent meeting of the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and asked if this matter would be looked into. The Panel was advised that should a formal complaint be received then it would be dealt with in accordance with the procedures mentioned previously.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 27 July 2020

2. Question received from Councillor Yates

“Since 2015 it has been mandatory for Police Authorities to collect data on hate crimes. Hate crimes are defined as acts of hostility or prejudice the victim believes is directed against them by reason of disability, race, religion, transgender identity or sexual orientation. What data exists between 2015 to 2019 for Staffordshire Police Authority and what data exists pertaining to the Staffordshire Moorlands area?”

Response:

The following information has been received from Staffordshire Police:

	Number of Reported Hate Crimes	
	Staffordshire	Staffordshire Moorlands
2015	1,055	56
2016	1,361	62
2017	1,673	61
2018	1,578	66
2019	1,493	59
Total	7,160	304

Councillor Yates asked if the Police could provide some more detailed information for these crimes. In particular, where the incidents had taken place and if there were any trends. The Portfolio Holder advised that this data would need to be supplied by the Police, however, the Council’s Licencing Team may be able to assist with some of this information. The Council would only be involved in cases where a Hate crime had occurred within a licenced premise. Councillor Swindlehurst suggested that it may worth exploring the Pub Watch scheme which used to run in the area a while ago, and a request was made by Councillor Holmes (Police, Fire and Crime Representative for the Council) for Councillor Yates to email him with any queries and he would ask the Commissioner directly for a response.

6 **COVID- 19 PANDEMIC - COMMUNITY RECOVERY**

Mark Forrester - Head of Democratic and Community Services, presented a report which outlined possible key social challenges and issues to consider in the recovery phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council had established an officer group to develop a Covid-19 recovery plan across a number of themes one of which was designated as ‘community recovery’. The initial scoping brief for the theme included:

- Developing an evidenced based understanding of the impact on our local communities,
- Understanding and planning for the impact on the support services that we currently provide,
- Providing support and coordination to the local voluntary sector, community groups and other partners,
- Developing community cohesion in respect of the response.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 27 July 2020

Covid-19 had significantly impacted on the lives of people with some groups of people impacted more severely than others and this had left a legacy that required a policy response. Similarly the potential impact in the next phase of lockdown easing, and longer term impact was likely to be felt unequally.

Impacts had been felt by older and vulnerable people, children and young people, working households and specific communities. These included impact on health, education, jobs and income, the local environment and services people access.

There had been positive developments, particularly the way in which people had stepped forward as volunteers and “good neighbours”. The voluntary sector had played a critical role in supporting people and the Council has formed a closer working relationship with key organisations.

The question was raised about what the key issues were that the Council should think about as part of ‘community recovery’, whether there were particular groups of people that needed to be prioritised in the short and medium term, and what the opportunity might be to work differently with the voluntary sector and other partners.

A series of steps were suggested, which included the development of a basket of indicators to track the impact of the pandemic over the long term, engagement with the voluntary sector, key statutory sector organisations and use of current formal partnerships to coordinate the community recovery work.

Members congratulated various local volunteer groups for the work they had recently carried out in the community. It was noticeable that the majority of volunteers were over the age of 70, but during the pandemic some younger volunteers had come forward to assist. The importance of continuous engagement with the volunteer groups was discussed, along with the possibility of a volunteer recruitment day and assistance from Your Housing Group. Mark Forrester – Head of Democratic and Community Services, agreed with the importance of volunteers being kept engaged and would discuss this with Support Staffordshire and volunteer groups.

The future of the Kniveden Partnership was raised, as it was a concern given the expected surge in mental health issues following the pandemic. There was also concern around the government food vouchers not being available to all families affected financially due to the virus and the possibility of housing evictions. The health and wellbeing of families was a factor that needed to be considered and it was asked if the leisure centres could provide any assistance with this.

It had been noticed that the temporary structures created to allow social distancing in a public house in Cheadle were not suitable for the winter months and it was queried if the Council could provide any support. This query would be referred to the Council’s Economic Recovery Group and Members were reminded to report any issues to the Local Outbreak Board.

The Chair advised the Panel that the therapy lodges at Werrington were now available, where support around mental health and finances could be assessed. Councillor Yates also highlighted the ‘Help Biddulph Bloom - Shop Local’- support campaign which had benefited local businesses and the self employed.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 27 July 2020

At this point of the meeting, Cllr Yates informed the Panel of his disappointment due to the recent Climate Change report not being included on the agenda for this meeting. The report had been sent to all members as an information digest and been considered by the Climate Change Sub-Committee, but it was the opinion of some members, that it should be debated and scrutinised by this Panel.

Mark Trillo - Executive Director People and Monitoring Officer, confirmed that the Climate Change Sub-Committee had agreed that it would function more effectively as a working group and that any reports from this group would be considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, followed by any recommendations to be considered by Cabinet. Information digests would continue to be circulated to members outside of the formal committee structure and members would be able to send comments directly to the Democratic Services Team.

DECIDED: That the Climate Change report be included on the agenda at the next meeting of the Panel.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm

_____Chairman _____Date