

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Questions to Portfolio Holders

### Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel Wednesday 17 March 2021

#### Question received from Councillor Hoptroff: -

**Q1.** “There has been a lot of public backlash at the allocation of £22,500 on fees for the Leek Trestle Market consultation. It is perceived that the Cabinet have already made their decision, so any opposition to their plan that comes out of the consultation will be disregarded anyway. Can Councillor Wain justify the allocation of this money?”

#### **Response:**

Proposals to refurbish Leek Market Hall were discussed at the Service Delivery and Overview Panel meeting on 29th January 2020 where members highlighted the importance of consultation with members and traders. 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. In July 2020, the decision report to undertake a feasibility study and business case to explore options for Leek Market Hall was subject to a call in request where it was noted that 'A key aspect of the feasibility study is the commitment to a full consultation' and that 'the debate on the Trestle Market in the Council Chamber earlier this year was a full one which was well attended and many present continually emphasised the importance of wide consultation with as wide as possible'.

In response to this, a specification was issued to appoint consultancy services for the preparation of a feasibility study and business case to explore possible enhancement and investment to Leek Market Hall to provide improved retail facilities and trader opportunities.

7 tenders were received and assessed. Quarterbridge Project Management were awarded the contract, having the best technical competence score and best commercial (Vfm) score. The submitted costs from the 6 other tenders ranged 102% to 159% of Quarterbridge's submission.

The specification also requested that widespread consultation was undertaken to inform the feasibility study and business case report. Stakeholder consultation has been conducted with District Councillors, Leek East Ward Councillors, Leek Town Councillors, Archer Fairs (licensed antique market operator), Stall holders and Leek's business community. A final report is expected in April.

#### Question received from Councillor Malyon: -

**Q2.** “Could someone tell me why we have a member of the public as a Cabinet Members advisor from June 2019 to the present day?”

#### **Response:**

A verbal response will be given.

**Questions received from Councillor Wilkinson:-**

Q3. "What are the operating times of Tape Street Car Park in Cheadle?"

**Response:**

The operational hours of the Tape Street Car Park are 8am – 6pm. Restrictions apply within these hours. However the chargeable hours are 9.30am – 3.30pm This means that customers are only required to pay and display between 9.30am to 3.30pm.

Q4. "This Council has spent in the region of £60,000 on consultants Cushman & Wakefield. Is there any justification in spending more money on consultation?"

**Response:**

A verbal response will be given.

**Question received from Councillor Page:-**

Q5. "Please could Councillor Porter provide an update on the transfer of Wetley Moor Common to SWT as promised at the last Service Delivery meeting on 27 January 2021?"

**Response:**

SMDC is continuing work behind the scenes to progress the transfer of eleven countryside sites to SWT not just Wetley Moor. Officers have met with colleagues from SWT and are in ongoing dialogue to ensure that the management arrangement that had previously been developed in 2018 remains fit for purpose for both organisations, due to the time that has passed since its initial development. Furthermore we have received a commitment from SOTCC that a report will be presented to their Cabinet in May in regards to the transfer of Wetley Moor and officers will work with colleagues to enable this to happen. It is expected that a further report will need to come back to members at SMDC once the final arrangements have been developed.