

# **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **SERVICE DELIVERY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING**

### **Minutes**

**WEDNESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: Councillor R Ward (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, G Bentley, C Brady, B Emery, N Hawkins, I Herdman, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, L Page, H Plimley, D Price, J Redfern, P Roberts, J Salt, H Sheldon MBE and P Wood.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors E Fallows, A Hart, K J Jackson, K Martin, I Plant, S E Ralphs MBE and S Scalise.

APOLOGIES: Councillors M Deaville, T Holmes and J Porter.

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

There were none.

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

**DECIDED** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 14 July 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

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

No urgent matters were raised.

12 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:-**

None were declared.

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

**Questions received from Councillor Bentley: -**

**Q1.** When will the Cheadle Car Parks be completed to the design requested by the Car Park Working Group – to include Parent / Child bays, School Drop-off Zones and Coach / Bus parking? An indication of the total cost of the project would also be helpful.

**Response from Councillor Hart and Councillor Ralphs:**

*The surface of Cheadle Well Street car park has recently been repaired as part of the ongoing capital programme to ensure the surface was safe and clear for all our customers and are separate to the work being undertaken as part of the SMDC strategic car parking review.*

*The feedback from the Cheadle members regarding the Cheadle car parks is being considered along with the feedback received across the district from the consultations that were carried out earlier in the year by Parking Matters. All these suggestions and requests have not only an impact on the Council's capital budgets but also on the long term revenue position within the medium term financial plan. It is a complex process to estimate and model the financial implications of these decisions. Not all of the suggestions from the feedback will be affordable, or enforceable or indeed are solely within the district's control, but are likely to involve working with our partner organisations such as SCC Highways, the bus companies and potentially the police over the longer term. Specific projects will need to be costed and prioritised for delivery as part of the overall strategy which will consider the car parking needs across the district as well as those specific issues that relate to Cheadle.*

Councillor Hart agreed to send his response in writing to the Clerk at Cheadle Town Council and Councillor Ralphs reiterated that all of the Cheadle Councillors had been given the opportunity to contribute to the Car Parking Strategy.

**Q2.** Can we have an update on the Cheadle to Cresswell Railway Track project?

**Response from Councillor Ralphs on behalf of Councillor Deaville:**

*No further information was available at this time. Councillor Bentley was involved with this project and had the same level of awareness as the Leader.*

In response to Councillor Bentley's request for an update in writing for his constituents, the Leader advised that as he was involved in the project he would be able to provide a statement to the public containing the latest information.

**Question received from Councillor Hoptroff: -**

**Q3.** Having investing £90,000 in February this year to refurbish the Leek Bus Station toilet facilities, the ladies toilet remains closed since early March following a fire. The Leek Town Mayor Cllr Lyn Swindlehurst has been approached by visitors from Stafford, Cannock and Nottingham, who whilst they love to visit Leek will not do so in the future as our facilities are below their expectations.

When will the facilities that have been heavily invested in be reopened to ensure the regeneration of our town does not suffer?

**Response from Councillor Hart:**

*The Council completed the refurbishment works of the Smithfield WCs in August 2020 at a cost of just over £100,000. These works were specified not only to invest*

*in the quality of the service provision but also to combat the anti-social behaviour and vandalism and high repair costs that has been an ongoing problem at these WCs for a number of years.*

*Despite this, the ladies toilets was subject to an extraordinary act of vandalism in March 2021 when it was intentionally set on fire. Both the Police and our insurance company were informed. The insurance claim was approved in June this year and the order was raised for the repair works at a cost of £15,347.18. The work was delayed due to the ongoing issues with materials and labour that is being felt strongly in all areas of the construction industry at the moment, but work did start in August. The work has now been completed and the WCs are now open again. The Silk Street WCs have been open and available for the public to use during this period.*

*Through these periods of anti-social behaviour and vandalism, the Council's Assets and Community Safety team have worked with the Police and understand it is a particular problem with youth crime, although the Police are not able to bring any prosecutions. Discussion have also covered the potential for the public realm CCTV to cover this area, but this is not available at the moment. Officers are investigating alternative options including installation of a standalone CCTV System to determine if this will be a suitable deterrent, but of course it is not possible to install CCTV inside the WCs themselves due to privacy issues.*

The Portfolio Holder was thanked for his response and was asked to ensure visitors were re-directed to alternative facilities should the toilets be temporarily closed in the future.

#### 14 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel considered its Work Programme and agreed the items listed, subject to, the Parking Strategy and Street Asset items being prioritised.

**DECIDED:-** That the Panel's Work Programme be agreed

#### 15 **ALLIANCE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES - ANNUAL PERFORMANCE UPDATE. (PRESENTATION)**

The Panel received an annual performance presentation delivered by the AES representatives which covered the following topics:-

- Reflections (performance, employee and community update
- Recycling performance)
- Waste and Fleet (missed bins, complaints, bin deliveries, recycling and vehicle availability)
- Street Cleansing, Grounds & Parks KPIs 2020/21 outturn
- Finance 2020/21 Out-turn
- 2020/21 Saving Plan Update
- COVID & HGV Driver Shortage
- Future Development & Continuous Improvement
- National Resources and Waste Strategy

- Business Development

Unfortunately, due to technical reasons, it wasn't possible for the questions and comments to be heard via the hybrid meeting system. Therefore, it was agreed for any queries to be submitted by email to the Democratic Services Team. The questions would be forwarded to AES and councillors would receive a reply in due course.

**DECIDED:** That the presentation be noted.

## 16 **SCRUTINY REVIEW - DISCUSSION ITEM**

Andrew Stokes – CEO, introduced a report which contained the feedback provided by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) following completion of their recent review of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements.

CfGS were commissioned to conduct a 'step back' review of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny arrangements. The review was conducted earlier this year and the conclusions were reported back to the Council in April. Their report was attached at Appendix A.

An all member workshop was held in September to enable CfGS to share their findings and to provide an opportunity for councillors to give some initial feedback. The notes from the discussions at the workshop were attached at Appendix B. It was suggested and agreed at the workshop that each of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panels should be given the opportunity to discuss the findings further and consider how the Council should take the recommendations forward.

CfGS made 12 recommendations for improvement. In order to assist members of the Panel with their considerations attached at Appendix C was a summary of CfGS's recommendations within a suggested response.

Following the consideration of this report by all of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panels a final report would be prepared for consideration by a meeting of the Full Council.

In response to query around insufficient time to consider this item, the CEO advised that there would be opportunity to discuss this report at each of the scrutiny panels.

Further discussion took place around more definitive outcomes from scrutiny, responses to questions to Portfolio Holders being in writing, process for selecting Chairs of committees based on a skill matrix and a skills audit for all councillors.

To conclude, the Scrutiny Review was an important issue for the Council and members should be involved earlier in the decision making process. The importance of a co-ordinated approach to the work programmes for each Panel and Forward Plan was highlighted by the Chair. An annual scrutiny workshop to prioritise the topics for review was welcomed by members.

**DECIDED:** The Panel considered the:

- feedback from CfGS as detailed in Appendix A of the report; and
- suggested response to the recommendations set out in Appendix C.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date