

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 7 MARCH 2022

PRESENT: Councillor D Shaw (Chair)

Councillors G Bentley, G Heath, I Herdman, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, A Hulme, B Johnson, J T Jones, T Riley, P Roberts, L Swindlehurst, P Taylor, R Ward and N Yates.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor M Bowen, B Cawley, K Flunder, A Hart, N Hawkins and J Porter.

APOLOGIES: Councillors T McNicol, J Aberley and K Martin.

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

There were none.

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

DECIDED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 17 January 2022 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

92 **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL.**

DECIDED – That the report of the Chairman of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel dated 14 Feb 2022 be **NOTED** by the Panel.

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

None had been received.

94 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

No declarations of interest were made.

95 **WORK PROGRAMME (6:10PM)**

DECIDED: That the Panel's Work Programme be agreed, subject to, the inclusion of an item requested by the Chair on Post Covid Recovery Activity.

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96 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY. (6.20PM)

There were none.

97 LOCAL POLICING ANNUAL UPDATE - CHIEF INSPECTOR MARK THORLEY. (6.30PM)

Chief Inspector Mark Thorley was in attendance accompanied by Moorlands Neighbourhood Policing Team Deputy Commander Inspector Jason Allport, to provide the Annual Policing Team update.

Overall this year, crime had increased by 8% (337 more crimes), despite reductions in crime over the past 3 years. However, within these statistics there were still significant reductions in some areas of crime, such as anti-social behaviour.

Members considered a report which gave statistical information around the different types of crime, outcomes of investigations, detail of road traffic collisions and the impact increased tourism had on the area. The report provided members with the current staff resource of the Local Policing Team.

The Chief Inspector also provided an explanation of the new policing model to the Panel and responded to queries from members as below:-

Reduction in numbers of PCSO's – The number of PCSO's had remained the same over the past few years and may have fluctuated slightly by no more than one or two.

Assistance with road closures – The event organisers were responsible for road closures, traffic arrangements and the marshalling of crowds during an event. Officers may be able provide a visible presence but could be called elsewhere to other duties in the area.

Increased community policing – At present, Response Officers were deployed from Hanley to locations within the Moorlands, supplemented by Neighbourhood Police Officers. Under the new policing model, a number of Response Officers would start and end their shift in the Moorlands. Therefore, Neighbourhood Officers would be more visible and able to spend more time in the community resolving problems.

Increased sexual offences – A member of the Panel commented that this had been explained clearly in the report, confirming that the figures were not as negative as they initially appeared, as these were historic cases which were being investigated .

Speed reduction on Weston Coyney Road due to serious accidents – Although the Police would be consulted in relation to this it was the responsibility of the County Council. Sergeant Bland's (Road Policing), details would be provided to those councillors that wished to initiate consideration of a reduced speed limit in this area. Due to the number of venues located on this road, parked vehicles were an issue and needed to be resolved.

Cllr Ward advised that a traffic survey had been undertaken and a solution to this problem was being investigated. He offered to send this document to Councillor Roberts.

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Monitoring of CCTV – David Smith, Head of Communities and Climate Change, advised that the CCTV was monitored by the station in Chapel-en-le-Frith and all cameras had recently been upgraded.

Facebook Live Plans – The Moorlands Policing Team had piloted this for the Force and approached local Facebook groups such as LeekTV and Cheadle Forum to ask if they could hold engagement sessions on their group pages. This has been a great success with such events being seen by thousands of viewers each time. There were plans for this type of engagement to be rolled out across the Force. More formal engagement would continue with the public but was accessed by much fewer numbers of people.

Policing of the Platinum Jubilee – This would be a challenging time, particularly over the period of 3-4 nights in the town centres when numerous road closures were in place. The Local Policing Team would be visible, engage with the community and take action, if necessary. Safer Night Operations would be held in Leek town centre and the Community Support mobile vehicle would be deployed during this period..

Control of on-street parking on zig zag lines – The issues in Biddulph were understood and it was suggested that Partners worked together to identify specific problematic locations and request the Enforcement Team to attend. A targeted approach had proven successful in the past. PCSO's did not have the authority to issue parking tickets but their presence outside school helped to alleviate inappropriate parking.

A local telephone number for councillors to use e.g. livestock in the road – Any obstruction on the highways required an immediate response so members were advised to call 999. If less urgent, it was recommended to use social media direct messaging which linked directly to the Police Control Room and would be handled in the same way as a telephone call.

Discussion also took place around the feasibility of a Police Enquiry Office at Biddulph Town Hall, legalities around parked vehicles on zig zags, underlying crime trends, independent scrutiny panels and increased community speed watch groups.

To conclude, members were pleased with the introduction of the new policing model and thanked the Chief Inspector for his informative report.

A message of thanks was conveyed to Mark and his Team for the excellent service provided during the pandemic with limited resources.

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

98

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL UPDATE - ROB BARBER, CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND DERMOT HOGAN, NORTHERN SERVICE DELIVERY GROUP LEAD. (VERBAL UPDATE) (7PM)

Rob Barber introduced himself as the newly appointed Chief Fire Officer for the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service from October 2021.

The Officer highlighted the key priorities to the Panel as follows;-

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Protecting Staffordshire and People

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- Public Confidence
- Service Reform

Demand and risk levels had changed for the Service and a significant increase in fire safety activities had been seen since the Grenfell disaster.

The Moorlands had been subject to wildfires, there had been increased wide area flooding in the County and plans were required to be in place to resource potential acts of global terrorism, all with the backdrop of ever reduced funding. Other dynamics also affected the Fire Service such as an aged population, obesity and poverty.

This Chief Fire Officer advised that he wished to focus on strengthened relationships, visible leadership and community visibility. The details of each local Station Manager would be sent to councillors.

It had been a difficult two years due to Covid-19 and the Service had adapted during the pandemic. In collaboration with partners, food parcels and medications had been delivered, along with support given to the vaccination programme at various fire stations.

Discussion took place around the number of Fire Fighters, retained/on-call staff in the rural areas and the associated issues linked to this national issue. There was a commitment to recruit the full establishment of Officers, utilise volunteers and work was being undertaken in relation to the On-Call system. Members offered their support to reach out to communities to assist with recruitment.

A member of the Panel advised that Mr Haywood – Head of Development Services, was awaiting a response from the Fire and Rescue Service in relation to a Planning enquiry.. This matter had been passed to the Fire Safety Department and the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that he would follow this up.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their attendance at the meeting.

DECIDED: That the update be received.

99

OUTSIDE - THE STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS PROJECT FUNDED BY ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND'S CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES PROGRAMME. (7:30PM)

David Smith - Head of Communities and Climate Change, introduced a report to the Panel about the Arts Council England's award of a grant of up to £943,000 for a 3 year project to increase participation in arts and culture across the District.

The Arts Council England had awarded a grant of up to £943,000 to a 3 year project to increase participation in arts and culture across Staffordshire Moorlands. This resulted from a competitive bidding process, with an application successfully submitted by Support Staffordshire on behalf of a consortium which includes Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Buxton and Leek College, and B arts (a Stoke-on-Trent-based arts organisation).

The project, called Outside, would commence on 1st April 2022 with a 12-month preparatory period followed with two years of delivery (April 2023 - March 2025). It

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would be an empowerment project with a programme of arts and cultural activities that would be led by people in the Staffordshire Moorlands working with professional artists as co-producers.

In response to a query on collaborative working with town and parish councils, it was confirmed that this would be the case with a focus on engagement.

DECIDED:

- 1) The Panel **NOTED** the contents of the report;
- 2) The Panel **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet **APPROVE** the financial commitments as set out within the report.

100 **CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE - DAVID SMITH, HEAD OF COMMUNITIES AND CLIMATE CHANGE. (VERBAL UPDATE) (8PM)**

Councillor Porter – Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Biodiversity, advised that a substantial written update would be provided on a 6 monthly basis to the Panel.

The verbal update included the following key points; -

- The Climate Change Officer was now in post and had been tasked to develop a Community Engagement Strategy and to monitor performance.
- The Council had been ranked second best in the country for its Climate Change Action Plan.
- The recently set Budget included allocation of funding for Climate Change.
- Approximately 20 community orchards would be completed by March 2022. A total of 60 volunteers, which included 40 Scouts had recently been involved in the planting at Cheadle and they would continue to monitor the site. Others were planned at Endon, Brown Edge and at some schools.
- A briefing note to summarise the Environment Act would be produced for all members.
- Following a successful trial, all Council fleet vehicles would run on a biofuel mix.
- The Council was represented on the Staffordshire Sustainability Board which had recently committed funding towards countywide staff resource.

A member of the Panel requested commitment to empower parish and town councils to make individual biodiversity plans at green spaces within their areas. Councillor Porter welcomed ideas for orchard sites to be submitted to him and suggested that he could attend meetings of town and parish councils in relation to this matter.

It was noted that members would like to see individual spend on each section of the Part 1 Action Plan and the percentage of carbon reduction achieved against the target.

Other comments were made around staff resource, increased grant funding/sponsorship, a limit on the number of orchards, purchase of saplings, levels of maintenance required and potential misuse of the orchard sites.

Councillor Hart – Portfolio Holder for Property and Tourism, gave an update on the LED Lighting Project, Energy and Buildings Surveys. The Council was working on a medium/long-term EV Charging Point Policy in conjunction with the County Council

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and also on a shorter term project for the installation of charging points in the three towns.

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

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date