

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 13 JUNE 2022

PRESENT: Councillor D Shaw (Chair)

Councillors I Herdman, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, J Jones,
J Redfern, T Riley, L Swindlehurst, P Taylor and N Yates.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors J Porter, P Roberts, S Scalise and R Ward.

APOLOGIES: Councillors A Hart, B Johnson and K Mills.

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

There were none.

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

DECIDED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 7 March 2022 be **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **TO NOTE THE MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING OF THE POLICE,
FIRE AND CRIME PANEL.**

DECIDED – That the minutes of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel dated 25 April 2022 be **NOTED** by the Panel.

4 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

No declarations of interest were made.

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

None had been received.

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

There were none.

7 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Vice-Chair - Councillor Swindlehurst, had drafted a document on the maintenance of defibrillators and wished for this to be included at the next meeting of the Panel. It was suggested that this could also be an item for consideration at a meeting of the Parish Assembly.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 13 June 2022

DECIDED:

- 1) That the Work Programme be agreed, subject to an item on the maintenance of defibrillators being added.
- 2) For the Panel to receive Climate Change Information Digests prior to meetings, rather than a standing item on each agenda.

8 BEAT THE COLD SERVICE OVERVIEW AND RECENT UTILISATION - THOMAS BOSTOCK, DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER.

The Panel received a presentation from Thomas Bostock – Development and Partnerships Manager which covered the following topics:-

- An overview of the Service
- Energy price cap and fuel poverty predictions
- Assistance available to clients
- Statistical information and number of SMDC residents referred for fuel vouchers
- Partnership working
- An example of feedback received from a client

There were 59 measures to support residents which would be provided after the meeting.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback as follows:

Isolation – The Team could speak to clients over the telephone and home visits were also available. They worked closely with Homelink,, community hubs and social prescribers. Referrals for assistance were received from Support Staffordshire and VAST.

Predictions – A huge increase in demand for the services provided by Beat the Cold had been seen and it was envisaged that this would rise again before the winter period.

Fuel Vouchers – These were welcomed by members but there was a level of concern that any cash payments could potentially be used to purchase food and clothing rather than used for energy bills.

Clarification of low salary – Dependent on the grant scheme and sometimes the number of occupants this was around £31,000. Whether savings were taken into account to qualify for the grants would be investigated and reported back after the meeting.

Some members were of the opinion that a crisis was looming and that an intervention policy was required to include the introduction of a team of contractors to undertake physical changes within properties to ensure they were as energy efficient as possible. In response, the Panel was advised that Beat the Cold empowered residents to make small changes themselves and provided information and knowledge to their clients. An explanation of the range of support packages available to the most vulnerable was given by the officer.

Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 13 June 2022

Further discussion took place around the importance of properties being retro-fitted at a faster pace to meet the net zero target, referrals to the Warmer Home Scheme/Sustainable Warmth Scheme, home assessments and maximum grant awards.

Tom was thanked for his informative presentation.

DECIDED: That the presentation be noted.

9 CLIMATE CHANGE VERBAL UPDATE.

Members considered a Climate Change Action Plan Update which included work undertaken with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, No Mow May, energy fuel poverty, estate decarbonisation, fleet, Carbon Literacy Training, development of the Action Plan and the Community Climate Change and Nature Fund.

A member of the Panel enquired into the possibility of the Climate Change Sub-Groups being re-convened. It was suggested that the 5 Groups met twice per year.

In response to a query to increase the budget for the Community Climate Change and Nature Fund, members were advised that groups could apply for up to £500, the total fund was £20,000 and there should be a collective approach to funding of schemes.

DECIDED: That the update be received.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm

_____Chairman_____Date