

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE 2022

PRESENT: Councillor T Holmes (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, C Atkins, G Bentley, M Bowen, C Brady, B Cawley, S Coleman, M Deaville, B Emery, E Fallows, K Flunder, M Gledhill, A Hart, N Hawkins, G Heath, I Herdman, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, A Hulme, K J Jackson, L A Malyon, L Page, I Plant, H Plimley, J Porter, D Price, T Riley, P Roberts, P Routledge, S Scalise, P Taylor, R Ward, P Wood and M Worthington

APOLOGIES: Councillors G Bond, J Davies, S Ellis, T Hall, P Jackson, B Johnson, J Jones, I Lawson, L Lea, K Mills, T McNicol, S E Ralphs MBE, J Redfern, J Salt, D Shaw, L Swindlehurst, E Wain, P Wilkinson and N Yates

25 COUNCILLOR HILDA SHELDON MBE

Councillors paid tribute to and observed a minute's silence in memory of Councillor Sheldon.

26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

26a ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING - 4 MAY 2022

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Council held on 4 May 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26b RECONVENED ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 26 MAY 2022

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the reconvened Annual meeting of the Council held on 26 May 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made.

28 CHAIRMAN'S OR LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE, IF ANY.

The Chairman announced that tickets for the upcoming Charity Fashion Show had sold out and that his Civic Service would take place on 17 July 2022.

29 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MEETINGS IN THE INTERIM PERIOD PRIOR TO THE COUNCIL MEETING, IF ANY.**

29a **AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE - ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT**

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Treasury Management Report 2021/22 be approved.

29b **AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE - TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

RESOLVED:

That the treasury management position as at 31st May 2022 be noted.

30 **TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10, IF ANY.**

1. Question to the Leader of the Council received from Councillor Bill Cawley:

“I was wondering given the recent changes to the structures of SMDC whether it was time to review the protocols of the relationship between members, the cabinet and officers particularly regarding communication.

Some officers are excellent in terms of responding to queries although this is not a universal standard throughout the authority.

A similar point can be made about cabinet members where messages are unanswered or require re sending.

One example occurred in March where I sent several messages between 1st March to 29th March concerning an issue in Leek West even requiring a message to the Chief Executive before it could be resolved.”

Response:

“We can’t comment on any unanswered messages from cabinet messages prior to the change in leadership at SMDC however we agree about the need to improve the communication between all tiers of the council. We are very keen to ensure that communication is prompt, concise and aids decision making and council processes at all times. The chain of hierarchy within the council’s management team from officers through senior management, heads of services, executive director and ultimately the chief executive is there to ensure that there is an escalation process with an enquiry. If any council officers don’t respond to councillor enquiries then please raise this with their immediate superior, and let the relevant portfolio holder know too and we will ensure that the enquiry is chased.”

We have recognised that this has been a problem historically and have all been frustrated by it and I hope that you are finding the new cabinet team responsive and open to communication via email, phone or any other medium of communication as it’s been a top priority for us as a new team to make sure that we are easier to do business with and support all members of this council.”

In response to supplementary questions the Leader of the Council stated that all written requests would be answered, that issues could also be raised at group leader meetings and that councillors should also reply to officers.

2. Question received from Councillor Gary Bentley:

“Can the relevant Cabinet member ask the County Council to look at the process they have with the contractors who repair the roads, as at the moment a lot of money and time is being spent inappropriately by paying for sets of traffic lights and then only doing one pot hole, then coming back and repeating the whole process for one more, instead of completing that area, It's poor management and something the County Council needs to seriously look at.”

Response:

“Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has no control over the process that Staffordshire County Council's contractors use when repairing roads. This enquiry is best directed to one of the county councillors for the area as it's not something that we at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council can change.”

In response to supplementary questions the Leader of the Council reiterated that enquires should be made with county councillors and that the district council was not able to assist further.

The meeting closed at 6.58 pm

_____Chairman_____Date