

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Questions to Portfolio Holders

Health & Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel Monday 12 June 2023

Questions received from Cllr Porter:

1. What plans does the new Portfolio Holder for Climate Change have to release the Plan for Nature developed by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, commissioned by me as his predecessor, over the last year and how does he intend to implement it?

Response:

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has informed officers that they will provide them with a first draft of the Plan for Nature within the next fortnight. A meeting been arranged for the first week of July to discuss the draft and consider approaches for launching the strategy. Whilst these arrangements are yet to be determined, I can assure that Councillor that it will include a presentation by the Wildlife Trust to this panel. With regards implementation, the Council has successfully recruited to the role of Biodiversity Officer and this post will be key to implementation of the plan. I will provide further information on implementation of the plan once I have had opportunity to review its content.

2. Will the Portfolio Holder be carrying on my Climate Change Community Fund and will he commit to ensuring that value for money is obtained from all projects funded by the scheme?

Response:

Yes, the Council intends to continue to deliver the fund and will provide regular updates to this Panel.

Questions received from Cllr Ward

3. The previous administration created a new Community Lottery to raise additional funding for local volunteer groups. The contract was signed in January and had a 6-month lead in time for delivery. Could you please update this council on the progress of this and if it has fallen behind schedule, when we can anticipate its final roll out?

Response:

The Community Lottery is on schedule to be launched within the timescales originally set out in the Cabinet Delegated Decision of 13th January. As set out in that report, the Gambling Commission can take up to six months to approve the establishment of a local authority lottery. This approval is now in place and we have

arranged an on-line event on 27th June at 11am to encourage good causes from across the district to sign-up and benefit from the lottery. The first ticket sales will then start on 11th July with the first prize draw on the 29th July. I would encourage all Councillors to encourage all clubs, charities and societies in their wards to sign-up and use the lottery to raise additional funds.

4. Forsbrook Parish Council have successfully negotiated the release of funding from SMDC to replace their localised CCTV system that was damaged several years ago. The money was due to be awarded following a successful insurance claim by SMDC. Forsbrook Parish Council have provided the necessary quotes to install a new locally administered system, as agreed last year, and are now awaiting the funding to be released. Could you please confirm when these monies will be released?

Response:

The District Council commissioned independent experts to carry out a review of its public realm CCTV in 2018. Following this review, the Council decided to remove the lowest use cameras and retain only those in Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle; and to update the control room and retained cameras from an outdated analogue system to a “future-proof” digital system. The Forsbrook cameras was one of the low use cameras that the Council agreed to decommission.

I am informed that the Parish Council asked the previous administration to fund the re-instatement of the camera but that the Cabinet did not make a formal decision about the funding. In response to Councillor Ward’s question, I will ask officers to prepare a paper that sets out all the relevant information so that the Cabinet can make an informed decision on whether or not the funding should be approved. This would include financial information and consider compliance with the Code of Practice. The Council is required by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 to have regard to the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice when exercising its functions in this respect, and hence would need to satisfy itself that the code would be complied with.