

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2023

PRESENT: Councillor A Hart (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, K Hoptroff, C Jebb, M Johnson, A Parkes and C Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C Atkins, M Gledhill, D Price, D Proudlove, C Wood, N Yates, B Emery, K Flunder and L Swindlehurst

APOLOGIES: Councillors A Church, T Holmes, L Malyon, P Roberts and L Whitehouse

16 **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS, IF ANY**

The following substitutions were made:-

- Councillor L Swindlehurst for Councillor Whitehouse
- Councillor Emery for Councillor Roberts
- Councillor Flunder for Councillor Holmes

17 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

Agenda No.	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda item – 9 Efficiency Programme	Councillor Johnson	‘Other’ Interest – Trustee of Borderland Voices. Discussion has taken place in terms of the use of an asset owned by the Council.
Agenda item - 11 Workforce Development, Training, Development, Apprentices and Graduates	Councillor Parkes	‘Other’ Interest – CEO of a mental health charity.

18 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 October 2023, be approved.

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

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There were none.

20 **WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be approved.

21 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY**

No questions had been received.

22 **ALLIANCE NORSE DELIVERY - ANNUAL REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE (PRESENTATION)**

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances Tony Taylor - Operation Director, Alliance Norse was unable to attend the meeting. The item was deferred to another meeting of the Panel.

23 **EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME 2023/24 TO 2026/27**

The report presented the Council's Efficiency Programme for the period of the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023/4 to 2026/7.

The medium-term financial planning process provided the Council with the opportunity to plan its delivery of public services in accordance with local priorities and against the backdrop of unprecedented public sector financial constraint.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was updated in accordance with the budget cycle. The current iteration of the MTFP covering the four-year period from 2023/24 to 2026/27 included a requirement to deliver efficiencies of £690k in order to deliver a balanced position. However, it was expected that the updated MTFP that included the 2027/28 financial year was likely to add to this need which, along with delivery and risks means that it was considered prudent to include a 50% contingency giving a £1.035m efficiency requirement.

The plan proposed in the report was £1.065m in total which was prudent in the light of ensuring there was a contingency level necessary to cover risks of delivery and that the updated MTFP was expected to contain additional efficiency requirements.

Members were assured that the plan would not be detrimental to frontline services and did not refer to compulsory redundancies.

Reference was made to the poor condition of 1 Market Place, Leek and how this affected the potential to lease the property to community groups.

RESOLVED:

The Committee endorsed the updated Efficiency Programme with the recommendation that it should proceed to Cabinet for approval.

24 **SMDC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - ANNUAL TRADE UNION LIAISON UPDATE**

The report provided the Panel with an update on trade union liaison and collective agreements for a period of twelve months.

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A joint union meeting was held on a quarterly basis. The purpose of these meetings was to provide a forum for discussion, consultation and negotiation between Senior Managers, Elected Members and the recognised trade union (UNISON) on workforce matters, terms and conditions of employment and Human Resources Policies and Procedures.

A full overview of the discussions that had taken place over the last 12 months was contained within Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) For the Panel to receive an update on trade union liaison on an annual basis.

25 **SMDC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - TRAINING / DEVELOPMENT / APPRENTICES / GRADUATES**

The Panel considered a report which provided a summary of the Alliance's workforce progression.

The Council recognised the importance of workforce progression and was committed to supporting with and improving the progression and upskilling of its workforce, in line with the aims of the Corporate Plans as well as the Organisational Development Strategy.

Workforce development was significantly important in the success of the Council and its strategic alliance partner High Peak Borough Council. This report highlighted the efforts and progress made by the strategic alliance in supporting its joint workforce to achieve career progression, upskilling and achieving their personal aims and those of the Councils.

The report focused on key areas such as training and training spending, statistics regarding progression, senior leadership and procedures and opportunities in place for continued workforce development.

Members welcomed the Council's commitment to the development of staff, recruitment of apprentices and the intake of graduates.

Discussion took place in relation to comparative councils with similar demographics, the Council proactively attending job fairs, colleges and universities and the possibility of school visits to inform students of the types of careers at the Council.

The age profile of the Council's workforce was of interest and the Panel was advised that the recent staff survey identified this information. In response to a query in relation to mental health support, it was explained that mental health and wellbeing was part of the new staff appraisal scheme, staff also had access to mental health first aiders and a counselling service.

A suggestion was made that it may be beneficial to supply staff with cards which detailed how staff could obtain help and support.

RESOLVED:

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- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) For The Meadows School, Leek to be contacted with a view to arrange a visit to the Council in terms of career opportunities.

26 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chair moved:-

“That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 10 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.”

27 **CHEADLE MARKET - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Panel received an update on Cheadle Market.

The meeting closed at 10.50 am

_____ Chairman _____ Date