

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL DECISIONS

WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor A Hart (Chair)

Councillors A Church, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, C Jebb, L Malyon,
A Parkes, P Roberts and M Worthington

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s) C Atkins, P Barks, Flunder, M Gledhill, P Hughes,
D Pascall, Proudlove, L Swindlehurst, M Swindlehurst and C Wood

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Aberley, M Johnson, D Shaw and L Whitehouse

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

The following substitutions were made:

Councillor Flunder for Councillor Aberley
Councillor Hughes for Councillor Shaw
Councillor L Swindlehurst for Councillor Johnson
Councillor Pascall for Councillor Whitehouse
Councillor Barks for Councillor Smith

29 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 November 2023, be approved.

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

There were none.

31 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

None were declared.

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

There were none.

33 **WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be approved.

34 **ALLIANCE NORSE ANNUAL REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE - TONY TAYLOR, OPERATIONS DIRECTOR (PRESENTATION)**

Members were given a presentation which covered the following topics;

- Background and Introduction
- People Structure Overview
- Finance Overview
- KPI's
- Compliance – Legislation

Discussions centred around specific issues concerned with maintenance and cleaning, lack of investment, capital costs, objectives and future plans to maintain efficiency, sub-contractor overspend, use of local contractors and generating more activity to use the Disabled Facilities Grant funding.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the presentation be received;
- 2) For the figures (split between HPBC & SMDC) on the capital programme income and expenditure to be provided to the Panel.

35 **HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

Members received a verbal summary on the Corporate Annual Health and Safety Report.

The report covered the following topics:

- Summary
- Corporate commitment to Health and Safety
- Provision of competent health and safety advice and support
- Systems in place to identify and assess risks to the organisation
- Monitoring of contractors
- Consultative arrangements
- Corporate health and safety training
- Proactive health and safety monitoring
- Reactive health and safety monitoring
- Progress against the action plan for 2022/23
- Proposed plans and targets for 2023/24
- Significant and emerging risks
- Conclusion

Discussion topics included:

Management of asbestos and legionella, increased verbal abuse, closed church yards, inclusion of topics in councillor development programme, updates to legislation and water safety risk assessment.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) For members to be briefed on health & safety, lone working & violence and aggression policy.

36 **COUNCIL TAX SECOND HOME AND EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUM**

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Consideration was given to a report concerning council tax premiums for empty homes and second homes.

The report covered the following topics:

- Recommendation
- Executive Summary,
- Link to Corporate Priorities
- Options and Analysis
- Implications
- Background
- Empty Homes
- Current Premiums
- Additional Income
- Second Homes
- Exemptions to Premiums.

Members debated properties being renovated including long term renovation projects, long term empty properties, frequency of inspection, housing crisis and individual cases.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) The Panel recommended Cabinet approval of the following:-
 - a) Implement the premium of 100% for properties that have been empty for over one year (applied to properties over two years currently) from 1 April 2024.
 - b) Implement the maximum premium of 100% for second homes from 1 April 2025 (this being the earliest that the new charge can apply, as legislation states that twelve months' notice is required to be given to existing owners of second homes).
 - c) Where premiums are to be applied, the Council is mindful of the current consultation by government, which recommends exceptions in certain circumstances outlined within this report. Subject to the outcome of that consultation, it is recommended that the Section 151 Officer be given delegated powers to implement the Council's policy on premiums in line with statute, the Council's requirements and any guidance given by the Secretary of State.

37 **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - WORKFORCE SURVEY OUTCOMES**

Members received a verbal summary of the SMDC Employee Survey 2023.

The report covered the following topics:

- Executive Summary
- Link to Corporate Priorities
- Implications
- Summary of the results and an action plan.

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Members welcomed the positive report, the inclusion of trends and comparisons in future reports was noted along with how staff could be encouraged to complete the survey.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

38 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.”

39 TO APPROVE THE EXEMPT MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 November 2023, be approved.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified

_____Chairman