

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 18 MARCH 2024

PRESENT: Councillor K Mills (Chair)

Councillors K Hoptroff, B Hughes, M Johnson, J Jones, J Kempster, J Porter, J Salt and R Ward

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C Beswick, A Parkes, P Roberts, M Spooner, L Swindlehurst, C Atkins, P Barks, B Cawley, M Gledhill, L Malyon, M Swindlehurst and N Yates

APOLOGIES: Councillors L Whitehouse, M Durose, M Haines, D Shaw and C Smith

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

The following substitutions were made:-

Councillor L Swindlehurst for Councillor Haines
Councillor Spooner for Councillor Whitehouse
Councillor Parkes for Councillor Smith
Councillor Roberts for Councillor Durose
Councillor Beswick for Councillor Shaw

46 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:-**

Agenda No.	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda item 9 – Local Policing Team Annual Update	Councillor Porter	‘Other Interest’ – Works at an NHS Control Centre and a volunteer for Staffordshire Police
Agenda item 10 – Fire and Rescue Service Annual Update	Councillor Salt	‘Other Interest’ – Husband is employed by the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes from the meeting held on 29 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

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48 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME PANEL.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2024, be noted.

49 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS (24 HOURS NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CHAIRMAN).

There were none.

50 WORK PROGRAMME.

An item on air quality, to include an update on the digitisation of live data was requested. The establishment of an Air Quality Steering Group was also referred to.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme be noted.

51 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.

Question received from Councillor Salt:

Q1. *“Can the Portfolio Holder outline the improved cost of living grant funding pot for local groups, including what projects it could potentially support? I'd be keen to know whether cafes that provide free food and drinks from churches outside of formal worship will be able to apply for this new funding stream as they were excluded from the previous fund?”*

Response from Councillor B Cawley – Portfolio Holder for Communities:-

The Council established the Staffordshire Moorlands Community Fund to provide match funding to organisations that are providing vital support for those who are most affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Community groups of all forms are eligible but need to demonstrate a contribution to at least one of the objectives within the corporate plan and provide at least one-third match funding.

It is standard practice across the public sector to not extend funding to religious activities or political organisations. This approach is followed, for example, by the national network of community foundations and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This exclusion captures activities of a religious nature but would not include activities such as running a foodbank from a church hall that is open to all.

52 LOCAL POLICING TEAM ANNUAL UPDATE.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team Deputy Commander was in attendance to provide the Local Policing Team annual update.

It was reported that there had been a 3% reduction in incident demand in the last 12 months with an average of 37 calls for service per day.

There had been a 3% overall decrease in crime in the last 12 months of 5,059 from 5,192.

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Members considered a report which gave statistical information around the different types of crime, outcomes of investigations, detail of road traffic collisions and anti-social behaviour which had reduced by 37%. There had been an increase in motor vehicle theft which had now reduced due to the arrest and remand of key individuals responsible for the bulk of offences. It was noted that this type of crime was part of a wider network and wasn't unique to the Moorlands. Reference was made to a recent spate of thefts in the Cheadle area and the Officer gave assurance that this matter was being investigated.

The report also provided members with the current staff resource of the team and information on the Harm Reduction Hub.

Discussion took place around long call waiting times, personal safety of councillors, turnover of PSCOs, support for community speedwatch schemes, crime prevention, neighbourhood disputes and recruitment of special constables.

Officers were thanked for the excellent service provided in the area.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be received;
- 2) For Councillors to notify the Local Policing Team should they plan to hold a public event;
- 3) 101 call rates to be provided to the Panel;
- 4) Current figures relating to the number of PCSOs compared to the number in 2010;
- 5) For the Officer to investigate whether it is possible to provide data on preventative work and the impact of these measures.

53 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL UPDATE.

The Panel gave consideration to a presentation provided by a Station Manager which covered the following topics:-

- Figures for attended incidents
- Accidental dwelling fires
- Road traffic collisions
- Availability of On Call appliances at Cheadle, Biddulph, Leek, Ipstones and Longnor
- Recruitment
- 3 Riders Trial
- Type of incidents attended
- Operational considerations

Members debated the reliance of retained fire fighters, obstacles to the recruitment of officers and measures taken to encourage applications for the role, mental health and wellbeing support and fire prevention in rural areas.

Concerns were raised in relation to the 3 Rider Trial and it was agreed that the Panel would be provided with the outcome of the trial at a future meeting.

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It was suggested that an open day at Longnor Fire Station may assist in recruitment, for the posters to be made more visible and utilisation of the gyms within fire stations.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the presentation be received and comments noted;
- 2) For the Panel to receive an update on the outcome of the 3 Rider Trial at a future meeting.

54 **SAFEGUARDING**

The report provided Councillors with an update on the Council's safeguarding arrangements.

The Council was committed to ensuring the safety and protection of people using its services and is required to enact policies and procedures to ensure that children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect were safeguarded when using services provided by or on behalf of the Council.

The key elements of the Council's response included: development of a Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect policy; development of a referral and reporting mechanism; provision of training for all staff members; and the establishment of a corporate safeguarding group to oversee the Council's response.

It was the opinion of some councillors, that given the importance of the subject matter, more time should be dedicated for members to fully consider the detail of the report and to have the opportunity for a full discussion to take place.

Members requested for a safeguarding training session to be arranged.

RESOLVED:

- 1) The actions taken by the Council in response to its safeguarding duties were noted;
- 2) For a safeguarding training session to be arranged for members.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date