



8 October 2024

Dear Councillor,

The next Meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday, 16 October 2024 in The Council Chamber, Moorlands House, Stockwell Street, Leek at 6.00 pm.

The Agenda for the Meeting is attached at Appendix 'A'.

Tea and Coffee will be served in the Churnet Room between 5.30pm and 5:55pm.

Yours faithfully,

M. Trillo
Executive Director & Monitoring Officer

NOTE

Councillors using the Car Park at the rear of the Council Offices are requested to indicate on their car that it is being used by a Councillor whenever they use the Car Park, otherwise they may be challenged by the Council's Car Park Attendant.

**Available in an alternative format by prior request and
on the Council's website: www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk**

Prayers will be offered prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence, if any.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting **(Pages 7 - 12)**
3. Urgent items of business, if any (24 hours notice to be provided to the Chairman).
4. Declarations of interest
 1. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
 2. Other Interests
5. Chairman's or Leader's announcements and correspondence, if any.
6. Receipt of petitions, if any.
7. To consider and debate any recommendations from the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Committees, if any.
 - 7.1 Audit and Accounts Committee - Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24 **(Pages 13 - 26)**

Recommendation

That the Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24 is approved.
 - 7.2 Audit and Accounts Committee - Treasury Management Update **(Pages 27 - 36)**

Recommendation

That Members note the current Treasury Management position at the quarter ended 30 June 2024.
8. Recommendations from meetings in the interim period prior to the Council Meeting, if any.
9. Council Meetings Procedure Rules and Delegations to Officers **(Pages 37 - 56)**
10. Local Government Boundary Review **(Pages 57 - 66)**
11. Local Plan Steering Group

Recommendation

To confirm the appointment of the Cabinet member responsible for planning matters in an ex-officio capacity to the Local Plan Steering Group in addition to members and officers appointed by Council on 15 May 2024.
12. Appointment of Substitute Independent Persons **(Pages 67 - 68)**
13. Notices of Motion in accordance with Procedure Rule No. 8, if any.
 - 13.1 Cllr L. Malyon - Winter Fuel Payment

Given the decision by the Government to stop the winter fuel payments to all but the poorest pensioners, this council urges the Government to:

 - Reinstate immediately the winter fuel payment for those pensioners who

have lost the benefit through the 'cliff edge' nature of the change and yet are still on low incomes.

- Investigate urgently alternative ways of supporting ALL vulnerable people with winter fuel payments, short term and long term, including the potential for creating a social tariff for gas and electricity funded through the profits currently being made by energy companies

Bearing in mind our duty of care to residents, this council must:

- Ensure that all pensioners in the district have information about all other available funds to which they may be entitled, such as pension credits, warm home discounts, Eco Flex, Hug 2, council tax support and others.
- Use all available data to identify those likely to be most disadvantaged and to contact them directly to offer help, including face to face, to complete application forms, particularly those that require online completion.
- Continue its efforts to ensure that Beat the Cold and Staffordshire Warmer Homes work as effectively as possible.
- Continue to use available council funding, such as the Cost of Living Fund, to give assistance to organisations working with vulnerable people needing support with fuel payments through the winter.

13.2 Cllr J. Porter - Winter Fuel Payment

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council believes that cutting the Winter Fuel Payment this winter, with virtually no notice and no compensatory measures to protect poor and vulnerable pensioners, is the wrong decision.

We want the Government to halt their proposed change to the Winter Fuel Payment and think again. Millions of struggling pensioners won't receive up to £300 they rely on to pay their bills, including around 23,000 local residents across the Staffordshire Moorlands. As many as 2 million pensioners who find paying their energy bills a real stretch will be seriously hit by this cut.

As Martin Lewis, founder of MoneySavingExpert.com, recently said: "The targeting of Winter Fuel Payments is too narrow with the winter we have coming. Pensioners were already due to get less as this will be the first time since winter 2022 they haven't got the up to £300 extra winter fuel cost of living top-up."

There are 3 key groups who will be hit hardest:

- Those who just miss out on Pension Credit because their very modest incomes are slightly too high for them to be eligible, usually because they have a tiny occupational pension. Many of them are women.
- Those with high energy needs because of disability or illness, and/or who live in energy inefficient homes which cost a lot of money to heat, estimated at 200,000 people.

- A million pensioners who don't receive the Pension Credit for which they are eligible because they do not claim it. The problem of low take up with Pension Credit is deeply entrenched, with about a third of all those entitled to it consistently failing to claim it over many years.

There's only been three months warning for this change – and older people will have expected to have this money in their pockets this year. There simply isn't long enough for many to work out another plan.

The Government has said more will be done to encourage those entitled to Pension Credit to claim it, but this will take time and won't stop many missing out this year. To make matters worse, this isn't the only support with energy costs pensioners are losing meaning that pensioners could have £600 or more less this winter even though energy bills stay high.

This is because they are also losing:

- Cost of living payment - to support with high energy costs over the last two years all pensioners received up to £300 on top of their Winter Fuel Payment in the last two winters. Those on low incomes or with a disability received more.
- The Household Support Fund delivered through councils which has provided help for some struggling older people is also ending in September.

This Council resolves to:

Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments. Council further requests the Chief Executive write to our local MP Karen Bradley asking her to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.

Request all group leaders within the Staffordshire Moorlands sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be suspended and reviewed.

Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits. This will include use of council noticeboards, social media, promotion in local press, and also targeted letters to those who may be eligible.

Pensioners deserve to retire in dignity and it is completely immoral to force some to choose between heating and eating. The Government should halt their proposed change to the Winter Fuel Payment and think again.

13.3 Cllr. J Jones - Leek Minor Injuries Unit

This Council strongly opposes the Staffordshire Integrated Care Board's proposals to close the Minor Injuries Unit at Leek Hospital and to deliver the

urgent care services Leek presently provides as part of a new Urgent Treatment Centre located at the Haywood Hospital.

The Council considers that retaining and extending the Leek Minor Injuries Unit is the only way adequate urgent medical care can be maintained for the people of the Staffordshire Moorlands.

13.4 Cllr C. Wood - Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

This council would like the PFCC of Staffordshire and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to note as a part of its current consultation that SMDC is gravely concerned about the 3 rider pilot scheme.

SMDC notes that a recent incident led to a crew of 3 entering a burning building to save a casualty. This incident undoubtedly put the lives of the crew at risk and placed firefighters in an impossible situation.

Retained firefighters work in their own communities, they know their neighbours, it is unfair for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue service to put them into these situations when their full-time counterparts wouldn't face such dilemmas.

SMDC would like SFRS to receive this comment as a part of their consultation exercise.

14. To answer questions asked under Procedure Rule No. 10, if any.
15. To consider any political group appointments or changes to membership, if any.
16. Exclusion of the Press and Public:
The Chairman to move:-

“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 100 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.”

17. To consider and debate any recommendations from the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Committees, if any.
18. To answer questions asked under Procedure Rule No. 10, if any.