

# **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING**

### **Minutes**

**WEDNESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2023**

PRESENT: Councillor A Hart (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, A Church, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, C Jebb,  
M Johnson, L Malyon and L Whitehouse

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors C Atkins, P Barks, J Cox, M Gledhill, D Proudlove,  
C Wood and N Yates

APOLOGIES: Councillors A Parkes, P Roberts and C Smith

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

Councillor Barks was substitute member for Councillor Smith and Councillor Cox substituted for Councillor Roberts.

9 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

DECIDED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2023, be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

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

There were none.

11 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

<b>Agenda No.</b>	<b>Member Declaring Interest</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Agenda item 8 – Asset Management Plan	Councillor Barks	Other Interest – Use of 21 Market Street, Leek by Act 21 Youth Project.
Agenda item 8 – Asset Management Plan	Councillor Johnson	Other Interest – Trustee of Borderland Voices. Discussion has taken place in terms of the use of an asset owned by the Council.

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### 12 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY

None had been received.

### 13 WORK PROGRAMME

The Leader advised that the role of the Panel was to monitor the strategic policies of the Council. He commented on the possibility of a small advisory or working to contribute towards the development of the Asset Management Strategy, He requested for members to make suggests/comments via the Chair of the Panel.

DECIDED: That the Work Programme be agreed.

### 14 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The report detailed the draft SMDC Asset Management Framework for consideration and allowed the Panel to consider the establishment of an Accommodation Review Working Group to monitor progress and make recommendation on the implementation of the framework.

Overall, members welcomed the report and requested further detail on individual assets owned by the Council, including the market value of such properties. It was also suggested that consideration should be given to local involvement, increased community use of assets and properties being fit for purpose.

An issue around cemetery maintenance, particularly prior to Remembrance Day was debated by members.

Councillors were encouraged to send any suggestions by email to the Chair.

DECIDED:

- 1) The Panel considered the draft Asset Management Framework and would offer recommendations to the Cabinet as it considered necessary prior to its adoption; and
- 2) Agreed the establishment of an Accommodation Review Working Group as set out in Section 11 of the report.

### 15 EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME

The report presented the efficiency requirement for balancing the budget in the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2023/24 to 2026/27 which included a requirement for efficiencies totalling £690,000, profiled across: 2023/24 £0, 2024/25 £200,000, 2025/26 £240,000, 2026/27 £250,000.

As had been reported previously, there remained significant uncertainty regarding the Council's financial position, both from the uncertainty of outcomes of national funding reviews (i.e. fair funding; business rates retention; and new homes bonus) and the extremely high and volatile levels of inflation and interest rates as well as geo-political influences. To this extent, it would be prudent to establish an efficiency programme that was greater than the values required in the MTFP.

Two key criteria were highlighted to members:-:

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- The programme should not be detrimental to the delivery of front-line services.
- Any reduction in staffing should be minimised; the programme included no expected staffing reductions.

Discussion took place around the use of Stockwell Villas, overnight car parking, options for the use of the car park to the rear of Moorlands House and tourist information.

EPC ratings and decarbonisation of the Council's assets was debated.

Clarification at a future meeting of solar array on Council land was requested.

Members commented on the importance of face-to-face meetings and parish councils.

DECIDED:

- 1) That the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the content of the report and agreed how it would seek to scrutinise its on-going development.

The meeting closed at 11.05 am

\_\_\_\_\_Chairman\_\_\_\_\_Date