

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council

15 May 2024

TITLE:	Development of Enhanced Partnerships with Town and Parish Councils
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Mike Gledhill - Leader
CONTACT OFFICER:	Linden Vernon – Head of Democratic Services
WARDS INVOLVED:	Non-Specific

Appendices Attached - None

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To propose to members a revised approach to the appointment of Chairman of the Parish Assembly. This forms part of the Council's priority action to develop enhanced partnerships with town and parish councils.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That from 2024/25, as part of the appointment to outside bodies process, the Council selects from amongst its elected members the Chairman of the Parish Assembly.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council adopted its new Corporate Plan in October 2023. This included a new priority action to develop enhanced partnerships with town and parish councils.
- 3.2 The Parish Assembly has been in place for a number of years and is well established. It ensures regular liaison with parish and town councils and promotes good practice. The Assembly has historically been chaired by the Chairman of the District Council and therefore changes each year. This appointment has been made ex-officio as part of the Council's appointments to outside bodies at Annual Council each year.
- 3.3 It is proposed to amend this approach to ensure that there is continuity in the Chairmanship of Parish Assembly meetings. It is therefore recommended that

from 2024/25, as part of the appointment to outside bodies process, the Council selects from amongst its elected members the Chairman of the Parish Assembly.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Aim 2 - Use resources effectively and provide value for money - Strong and effective democratic processes.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 That from 2024/25 the process for the appointment of Chairman of the Parish Assembly is revised as detailed in section 6.5 of this report (recommended).
- 5.2 That the Council does not change the process for the appointment of Chairman to the Parish Assembly (not recommended).

Mark Trillo

Executive Director (Governance and Regulatory Services) & Monitoring Officer

Web Links and Background Papers

None

Contact details

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6. **Detail**

- 6.1 On 18 October 2023 the Council adopted its new Corporate Plan. This included a new priority action to develop enhanced partnerships with town and parish councils of which there are 42 across the whole of the Staffordshire Moorlands.
- 6.2 A report to develop an implementation plan for this priority action will be presented to a future Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and to Cabinet. It is envisioned that this will encompass a number of strands including the work of the Parish Assembly which has been in place for a number of years and is well established. It ensures regular liaison with parish and town councils and promotes good practice. The Assembly has covered a range of topics that has included:
- Partner Updates including Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, Staffordshire Moorlands Local Policing Team, Staffordshire County Council Highways, West Midlands Ambulance Service, Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association, Leek Moorlands Hospital
 - Events Arrangements
 - Planning Enforcement
 - Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Defibrillator use in the district
- Empowering parishes to meet the Climate Emergency
- Development of the Social Economy
- Regeneration and Planning Update
- Leisure and Tourism Update

6.3 The Parish Assembly has historically been chaired by the Chairman of the District Council and therefore changes each year. This appointment has been made ex-officio as part of the Council's appointments to outside bodies at Annual Council each year. The Leader of the Council is also appointed as a representative to the Assembly.

6.4 It is proposed to amend this approach to ensure that there is continuity in the Chairmanship of Parish Assembly meetings. This will enable the opportunity for the Chairman to continue to build relationships with parish and town councils and gain ongoing insight of the issues affecting them within the district and to act as their advocate.

6.5 It is therefore recommended that from 2024/25, as part of the appointment to outside bodies process, the Council selects from amongst its elected members the Chairman of the Parish Assembly. The Leader of the Council will also continue to be appointed as a representative of the District Council.