

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 22 MAY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor A Hart (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, A Church, B Emery, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, C Jebb, M Johnson, L Malyon, A Parkes, P Roberts, L Swindlehurst and G Taylor

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C Atkins, M Gledhill, P Hughes, M Swindlehurst, C Wood and N Yates

APOLOGIES: Councillor M Worthington

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

Councillor P. Hughes was substitute member Councillor Worthington.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 April 2024, be approved as a correct record.

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

There were none.

4 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

None were declared.

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

The question was dealt with in exempt session.

6 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members discussed the possibility of the Resources O&S Panel scrutinising the financial aspects of outside bodies. It was confirmed that a report on the value and benefit of outside bodies was being prepared which was within the remit of the Community O&S Panel. However, should members have any financial queries these could be submitted as questions to Portfolio Holders at the Resources O&S Panel.

In his capacity as the Council's representative on the Peak Park Authority, the Chair offered to provide feedback on this outside body to the Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

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RESOLVED: That the Work Programme be noted.

7 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE UPDATE

The Panel considered the outcomes from the Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in February 2024.

The Corporate Peer Challenge process, which was co-ordinated by the Local Government Association (LGA), formed a key aspect of sector-led improvement, and the process was designed to complement and add value to the Council's own performance and improvement thinking. The Council previously commissioned its first Corporate Peer Challenge in January 2022 in conjunction with its strategic alliance partner High Peak Borough Council (HPBC). Following its completion, the Alliance published the CPC report and action plan for addressing the recommendations made during that CPC.

The Alliance commissioned the LGA to deliver another peer review in 2024, with a scope to review the CPC recommendations made in 2022. However, as the political context of both Councils had changed following the May 2023 local elections, it was also agreed to review the position against the core CPC components.

The peer team's report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The peer team found that the Alliance was impressive and continued to be effective. The team reported that the key finding from the previous CPC in 2022 that "Both councils can be seen to have been well managed organisations over many years. There is sound financial management and attention is paid to maintaining good governance and to managing risk. Both are performance-focused and can demonstrate the delivery of services that are high performing and low cost, with a value for money focus." remains true.

The peer team's made 8 key recommendations to the Council following this CPC which are detailed in section 8.6 of the report.

Members welcomed the report and commented positively on the outcome of the CPC and thanked Officers for their contribution towards the review. It was the opinion of some members that improvements could be made to communications/engagement and clarity in terms of the Climate Change Action Plan.

Discussion took place around recruitment, career progression and retention of staff and the impact the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) arrangements may have on the Staffordshire Moorlands. The importance of working with partners and monitoring performance by the scrutiny panels was highlighted.

In response to a query in relation to Council controlled companies, the Panel was advised that performance was managed on a daily basis and Commissioning Boards held the companies accountable. Senior Officers also regularly attended scrutiny panel meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Resources & Scrutiny Panel noted the findings from the Corporate Peer Challenge.

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8 EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME UPDATE (FEES AND CHARGES) - PRESENTATION

The Panel received a presentation which covered the following topics:-

- Background to the Efficiency Programme
- Objectives for Income and Charges
- The Council's Gross Income
- Charging Structure
- Next Steps

Arrangements were in place for Heads of Service to attend meetings of the Panel in relation to the Medium Term Plan and their individual service areas.

The Panel was reminded that the programme should not be detrimental to the delivery of frontline services and there were no expected compulsory redundancies.

Members stressed the importance of the involvement of town and parish councils and for decisions around car parking to be evidence based, taking into account visitor numbers and the regeneration of areas.

Discussion also took place around the delivery of the Tourism and Green Spaces strategies.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received and comments noted.

9 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 100 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.”

10 EXEMPT QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

The Portfolio Holder for Services responded to a question in relation to empty properties owned by the Council.

11 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the exempt minutes from the meeting held on 22 May 2024, be approved as a correct record.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am

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_____ Chairman _____ Date