

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2024

- PRESENT: Councillor L Swindlehurst (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors B Emery, B Hughes, J Jones, J Porter, J Salt, L Swindlehurst and R Ward
- ALSO PRESENT: Councillors L Malyon, P Roberts, M Spooner, C Atkins, C Beswick, B Cawley, J Cox, M Gledhill, P Hughes and N Yates
- APOLOGIES: Councillors K Mills, M Durose, M Haines, M Johnson, J Kempster, C Boone and L Whitehouse

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

The following substitutions were made:

Councillor Roberts for Councillor Durose
Councillor Malyon for Councillor Mills
Councillor Spooner for Councillor Haines

18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:-**

Agenda No	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda item 9 – Overview of OUTSIDE Arts Projects	Councillor Cox	“Other” – A member of Leek Arts Festival
	Councillor Salt	‘Other’ Employed by Staffordshire University
	Councillor Ward	‘Other’ Chair of Caverswall Community Society.
Agenda Item – Not Specified	Councillor Porter	‘Other’ Works at an NHS Control Centre and a volunteer for Staffordshire Police
Agenda Item 11 – Working with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector	Councillor Salt	‘Other; - Board Member of Biddulph Youth and Community Zone

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2024, be approved as a correct record.

20 **TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes from the previous meeting of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel on 24 June 2024, be noted.

21 **URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS (24 HOURS NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE CHAIR).**

There were none.

22 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS.**

None had been received.

23 **WORK PROGRAMME.**

RESOLVED:

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Work Programme for 2024/2025.

24 **OVERVIEW OF OUTSIDE PROJECTS.**

The Panel received a presentation which provided a detailed overview of a vast range of OUTSIDE projects between April 2023 - September 2024.

Members praised the organisation for the Telling Tales story exchange residency which took place in various towns/villages, Cheadle Moon project and the Pride in the Moorlands event. The community art installations around the Caverswall area were also complimented.

Discussion took place around data and evaluation of projects, sports art/culture, local connection of artists, economic benefits, governance and value for money.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the presentation be received and comments noted;
- 2) Breakdown of financial information to be circulated to members.

25 **CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Environment, introduced a report which set out the progress that had been made in delivering the Council's Climate Change Strategy and delivery plans in response to the declaration of a climate change emergency.

The Climate Change Annual Report 2023/24 (attached at Appendix A) to the report described delivery across all Council services throughout the year. Each Service

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was responsible for initiatives within its own area. The Communities and Climate Change Service co-ordinated and supported the activities.

Section 8 of the reports highlighted the progress that had been made with the actions agreed in the previous (2022/23) Climate Change Annual Report.

In response to workload demands, including the need for engagement, the Council had introduced a new post to support the work towards nature recovery (biodiversity) and, more recently, created a new post to focus on the delivery of domestic energy initiatives.

There were a number of further actions that were proposed following the consideration of the Annual Report. These were summarised in Section 9 of the report.

Much had changed since the Climate Change Action Plans were first approved and, in that light, the Council's targets for both operational and district emissions, and the plans for meeting those targets, needed to be reviewed. The need to review our approach had been identified internally by both elected members and officers, and particularly by the Climate Change Working Group, and was also a recommendation following the Council's Corporate Peer Challenge.

Section 10 of the report presented a pathway for reviewing both the strategy and targets.

Councillors and Officers were thanked for their contributions towards this report.

A member of the Panel enquired about future opportunities around training, Nature in your Neighbourhood project and Community Climate Change funding. In response to a query, an update on the possible extension of the public spaces protection order was provided. The latest position on the net zero target by 2030 was debated and a report in relation to Nature in Your Neighbourhood project would be brought to this Panel in the future.

Improvements in communication via the Councils website and social media channels was noted.

Discussion took place around public access to the recently installed electric vehicle charging points on the car park to the rear of Moorlands House and other planned installations. The Portfolio Holder advised that investment in the charging points was to give confidence to the public and support the transition to electric vehicles. A report was requested on the usage of these EV charging points during the daytime and evening at a future meeting.

Overall, the report was received positively but it was commented that the reduction in operational carbon emissions was disappointing and the total percentage reduction figure needed to be amended. It was suggested that projections for the Council's carbon footprint and plans to address climate scepticism would be beneficial.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted the Councils plans for decarbonisation and other renewable projects.

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RESOLVED:

1. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel supported the recommendations that Cabinet:

- a) Noted the progress to date
- b) Approved the recommended next steps

2. For the recording of the Biodiversity Net Gain training session to be circulated to all councillors;

3. For the Parish Assembly to be kept informed of the Climate Change Strategy.

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WORKING WITH THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE (VCSE) SECTOR

The Panel gave consideration to a report which provided an update on:

- the Council's working arrangements with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations
- the use of the Council's Community Grant (CG) funding
- how the Council intends to continue to collaborate with and support the VCSE sector to deliver the Corporate Plan and achieving further efficiencies.

A member advised the Panel that Biddulph Youth and Community Zone had long term funding issues, particularly around core funding.

The new Community Grant scheme was praised and it was suggested that organisations should initially contact Support Staffordshire for support, training and advice.

The importance of voluntary community groups was highlighted.

RESOLVED:

1) The Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel supported the following proposals to Cabinet:

- a) Notes the feedback from organisations on the state of the local voluntary sector.
- b) The Council used the money raised from the Staffordshire Moorlands Community Lottery (SMCL) held in the central fund to promote and support the work of the VCSE sector (after fees for the Gambling Licence and associated costs are paid). It is expected that this would amount to around £5,000 based upon experience from the first year of operation.
- c) The allocation of a small budget should be set aside for the next 3 years to promote the Staffordshire Moorlands Community Lottery as a means to make community groups more self-sustainable. The promotion would

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include promoting the SMCL to new groups and encourage members of the public to play the lottery and support their given good cause.

- d) The Council consults with the VCSE sector about developing an agreement (a Compact) between VCSEs groups and the Council, and possibly wider statutory sector, to enhance how both sides to work together and understand what to expect from each other.
- e) The Council worked with the VCSE Sector and other partners to identify how the work of the sector can be better publicly acknowledge and promoted.
- f) The Cabinet agrees to extend funding for the Volunteering For All Officer to continue to provide support for people within the district who are considering volunteering.
- g) The Council reviewed the Community Support Grant fund prior to 2025/26 to take account of the priorities in the Corporate Plan, funding decisions of statutory partners and the financial pressures experienced by VCSE organisations with a view to move to 3-year funding agreements.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

_____Chairman_____Date