

## Minutes of the County Council Meeting held on 13 February 2020

Present:

<b>Attendance</b>		
Ben Adams	Phil Hewitt	Bob Spencer
Charlotte Atkins	Jill Hood	Mike Sutherland
Philip Atkins, OBE	Syed Hussain	Mark Sutton
Ann Beech	Keith James	Stephen Sweeney
David Brookes	Trevor Johnson	Simon Tagg
Gill Burnett	Bryan Jones	Martyn Tittley
Ron Clarke	Dave Jones	Carolyn Trowbridge
Tina Clements	Jason Jones	Ross Ward
Maureen Compton	Ian Lawson	Alan White
John Cooper	Alastair Little	Philip White
Mike Davies	Johnny McMahon	Conor Wileman
Mark Deaville	Paul Northcott	Bernard Williams
Alan Dudson	Ian Parry	David Williams
Ann Edgeller	Kath Perry MBE (Chair)	Victoria Wilson
Keith Flunder	Jeremy Pert	Mark Winnington
Richard Ford	Bernard Peters	Susan Woodward
John Francis	Jonathan Price	Mike Worthington
Colin Greatorex	Kyle Robinson	
Gill Heath	David Smith	

Apologies for absence: Derek Davis, OBE, Janet Eagland, Helen Fisher, Julia Jessel, Jeremy Oates, Natasha Pullen and Paul Snape.

### **PART ONE**

#### **43. Declarations of Interest under Standing Order 16**

The following Member declared an interest in accordance with Standing Order 16.5:-

<b>Member</b>	<b>Minute Nos.</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Susan Woodward	47	Personal	Co-Chair of Chasewater Friends

#### **44. Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 December 2019**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 19 December 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **45. Chairman's Correspondence**

##### **Her Majesty the Queen's New Year's Honours.**

The Council extended their congratulations to the following three Staffordshire residents who had been honoured by Her Majesty the Queen with MBE's in this year's the New Year's Honours:

- Yvonne Clarke, Managing Director of Pathways Community Interest Company, who had received her award for services to innovation and the community;
- Peter Walters, training manager at WorldSkills UK, who had received his award for services to the WorldSkills competition; and
- County Councillor Kath Perry who had received her award for services to the community in Staffordshire.

#### **46. Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/2025 and 2020/21 Budget and Council Tax**

The Council received a joint report by the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance on the Strategic Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020/25 and 2020/21 Budget and Council Tax proposals.

Mr Sutherland expressed his thanks to the County Treasurer and those other members of staff who had assisted in the development of the MTFS, the Chairman and Members of the Corporate Review Committee's Medium Term Financial Strategy Working Group for the robust manner in which they had challenged and questioned Cabinet Members during their scrutiny of the MTFS/budget proposals, and also to his Cabinet colleagues and Members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Introducing the report, Mr Sutherland explained that the Strategic Plan was the primary document that shaped the financial plans and the Corporate Delivery Plan. Developed and delivered in tandem, they were supported by a range of directorate, service and team plans across the council. The Plan had been refreshed and contained the following five priority areas:

- Help Staffordshire's Economy to grow and generate more good jobs.
- Invest in Infrastructure for growing communities.
- Improve education and training so that life-long learning offers everyone the opportunity to succeed.
- Inspire healthy, independent living.
- Support more families and children to look after themselves, stay safe and well.

Mr Sutherland indicated that these were unprecedented times with the Council having to meet the huge and increasing financial pressures from adult social care and children's services, with reduced funding from Central Government. He added that, in 2019/20 the Council had managed to balance its budget for 2019/20 and the MTFS overall by closing an initial gap of around £35m each year. The cost reduction options included in

this balanced position were not without risk and the achievement of them had been monitored closely throughout this year.

Members noted that in order to continue to provide social care to the most vulnerable people in our communities, as well as continuing to provide a range of services that residents and businesses demand albeit on a reduced basis, the Council had to make some extremely difficult decisions about what it could continue to fund. Mr Sutherland added that it was interesting to note that 10 years ago the council spent around £200m on adults and children care services. For 2020/21 this figure exceeds £320m. The Council was continuing to lobby Government on the critical need for more money for social care and for the sector to return to the arrangements of financial settlements covering a 3 or 4 year period to aid in financial planning.

Mr Sutherland explained that Cabinet proposed a net revenue budget of £479.595 million for 2020/21 giving a Council Tax requirement of £370.977million. With regard to Council tax, Members were informed that Staffordshire County Council had the third lowest council tax level amongst counties in England. This position demonstrated the careful consideration that the council had taken regarding the level of tax demand placed on residents. However, this did restrict the level of funding required to pay for essential services and, clearly, a careful balance needed to be struck between these two factors. The current assumptions in the financial plans were that the general council tax increase (aligned with the referendum limits published by government) was 1.99% for 2020/21 and thereafter. In addition, the Spending Round announced that the government would again permit social care authorities to raise council tax by a further 2% to help with funding pressures in social care. This additional increase was also included in the financial plans and were assumed for future years. The recommended proposed council tax at Band D was £1,295.95 which was an increase of less than £1 per week for the average taxpayer.

Mr Sutherland moved, and Mr Atkins seconded, the recommendations contained in the report before the Council.

Mrs Atkins indicated that the budget proposals contained cuts amounting to a further £62 to be made over the next five years. She expressed concern that due to the Local Government Financial Settlement only being for one year, this made it impossible for the County Council to plan its service provision in the longer term. She also expressed her disappointment that the Government had failed to deliver its long-awaited Green Paper on the future funding of Social Care; but welcomed the County Council's proposal to publish its own Green Paper on the funding of Social Care in Staffordshire.

Mr Robinson referred to the significant risks contained in the budget if the proposed savings were not achieved. He also expressed the view that Central Government had turned its back on Staffordshire through its decision to cease the business rates retention pilot. Mr Robinson added that he shared Mrs Atkins view that the government's decision to issue a one-year financial settlement created uncertainty and an inability to plan for the longer-term. He also expressed the view that the proposed budget failed to tackle the poor condition of the County's roads and footways, and was inadequate for addressing the issue of Climate Change.

In responding to Mrs Atkins and Mr Robinson, Mr Winnington indicated that the budget was about planning for the future and that, by working with partners like the Local Enterprise Partnership, the County Council was able to grow the local economy. He also stated that, through initiatives like the roll-out of Superfast Broadband/Fibre to Premise, steps were being taken to “future-proof” Staffordshire and support local businesses. Mr Winnington also indicated his support for the Council’s commitment to the environment.

Mr Alan White stated that the budget proposals were evidence of effective planning by the Council and were clear and transparent. He added that the budget also reflected changes in demand and provided for the effective delivery of services.

Mrs Woodward indicated that there was no reference in Mr Sutherland’s statement about the need for improvements in the Council’s Special Educational Needs (SEND) provision and that, although this budget provided for the highest percentage of spend on Social Care in recent years, this was not necessarily the highest spend in monetary terms. She added the Council had increased the level of Council Tax near to the maximum permitted, year on year.

Mr Parry stated that, in his opinion, this was a well thought out budget which did the right thing in that it protected the most vulnerable members of the community. He also referred to the savings which had achieved to date whilst continuing to protect the provision of essential services. He added that he shared Members concerns in respect of the need to find a long-term solution for the funding of social care and also for Councils to receive a financial settlement covering a number of years to enable them to plan more effectively.

Mr Spencer referred to the excellent work carried out by the SEND Hubs in addressing issues faced by children and young people with Special Educational Needs and their families. Mr Price added that since November 2018, good progress had been made in addressing the issues highlighted in the written statement of action including improved engagement with schools, the provision of additional SEND workers and the development of KPI’s (key performance indicators). Mr Sutton also added that this work was being overseen by a cross-party working group and that further proposals would be coming forward shortly. He also referred to the £8.1m additional investment in Children’s services contained in the MTFs and the proposals for how this would be utilised.

Mr Wileman referred to the level of investment proposed by the Council over the next few years in tackling issues around climate change. He also referred to the work undertaken to date on this issue, the development of an action plan and the proposal to hold a Staffordshire 100 event on sustainability.

Mr Deaville stated that Staffordshire was a great place in which to live, with new schools being built, low unemployment levels, and plenty of green spaces. He added that there were a number of challenges facing the Council including funding for highway maintenance; the impact of HS2; and demand for, and cost of, adult social care. Mr Deaville concluded that the Council would continue to spend taxpayer’s money wisely and support the most vulnerable members of the community.

Mr Bryan Jones indicated that he welcomed the budget and MTFS proposals submitted by Mr Sutherland. Mr Greatorex added that there was a lot of detail contained in the report and that he also supported the proposals.

Mr Philip White added that it had been a difficult budget to set, compounded by the Government only giving a financial settlement for one year.

Mr Sutherland thanked Members for their comments. He added that the County Council was ambitious; ready to face the challenges before it; and would continue to support the most vulnerable members in the community.

The Chairman reminded Members that, under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, if they were two months or more in arrears with their Council Tax it was an offence for them to vote on the budget. Members were also required to disclose at the meeting the fact that this Section applied to them.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the Chairman called for a named vote to be taken in relation to the approval of the recommendations contained in the report, the result of which was as follows:

Those Members voting in support of the recommendations:

Ben Adams	Jill Hood	Mike Sutherland
Philip Atkins, OBE	Keith James	Mark Sutton
David Brookes	Trevor Johnson	Stephen Sweeney
Gill Burnett	Bryan Jones	Simon Tagg
Tina Clements	Ian Lawson	Martyn Tittley
John Cooper	Alastair Little	Carolyn Trowbridge
Mike Davies	Johnny McMahon	Ross Ward
Mark Deaville	Paul Northcott	Alan White
Ann Edgeller	Ian Parry	Philip White
Keith Flunder	Kath Perry MBE	Conor Wileman
Richard Ford	Jeremy Pert	Bernard Williams
John Francis	Bernard Peters	David Williams
Colin Greatorex	Jonathan Price	Victoria Wilson
Gill Heath	David Smith	Mark Winnington
Phil Hewitt	Robert Spencer	Mike Worthington

Those Members voting against the recommendations: Nil

Those Members abstaining from voting:

Charlotte Atkins	Maureen Compton	Dave Jones
Ann Beech	Alan Dudson	Kyle Robinson
Ron Clarke	Syed Hussain	Susan Woodward

**RESOLVED** – (a) That the following be approved:

- The adoption of the Strategic Plan (as set out in Appendix 16 to the report)
- a net revenue budget of £479.595m for 2020/21 (as set out in Appendix 13 to the report);
- planning forecasts for 2021/22 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 13 to the report;
- a contingency provision of £4.000m for 2020/21;
- a net contribution to reserves and general balances of £14.671m for 2020/21;
- a budget requirement of £494.266m for 2020/21;
- a council tax requirement of £370.977m for 2020/21;
- a council tax at Band D of £1,295.95 for 2020/21 which is an increase of 3.99% when compared with 2019/20. This results in council tax for each category of dwelling as set out in the table below:

<b>Category of dwelling</b>	<b>Council Tax rate £</b>
Band A	863.97
Band B	1,007.96
Band C	1,151.96
<b>Band D</b>	<b>1,295.95</b>
Band E	1,583.94
Band F	1,871.93
Band G	2,159.92
Band H	2,591.90

- that the County Treasurer be authorised to sign precept notices on the billing authorities respectively liable for the total precept payable and that each notice states the total precept payable and the council tax in relation to each category of dwelling as calculated in accordance with statutory requirements;
- the Financial Health Indicators set out in Appendix 12 to the report;

(b) That the following recommendations which are included within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2020/21, the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 and the Commercial Investment Strategy 2020/21 (as set out in Appendices 11a to 11c to the report) be approved:

- Approve the Minimum Revenue Policy for 2020/21 as contained within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2020/21 in Appendix 11a to the report;
- Approve the Prudential Indicators as set out within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2020/21 at Appendix 11a to the report;
- Approve the 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy, based on the 2017 CIPFA Codes (Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code), and 2018 MHCLG Guidance (on Local Government Investments and on Minimum Revenue Provision);

- Adopt the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) 2020/21 detailed in paragraphs 66 to 114 and Annex A and Annex B of the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 (as set out in Appendix 11b to the report);
- Approve the policies on reviewing the strategy, the use of external advisors, investment management training and the use of financial derivatives as described in paragraphs 115 to 124 of the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 (as set out in Appendix 11b to the report);
- Approve the proposed borrowing strategy for the 2020/21 financial year comprising maximising the use of cash in lieu of borrowing as far as is practical; the ability to borrow new long-term loans, where deemed appropriate; the use of cash to repay loans early, subject to market conditions and a loan rescheduling strategy that is unlimited where this re-balances risk;
- The Treasury Management Strategy recommendations will operate within the prudential limits set out in Annex C of the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 (as set out in Appendix 11b to the report) and will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Finance, with respect to decisions made for raising new long-term loans, early loan repayments and loan rescheduling;
- Approve the Commercial Investment Strategy for 2020/21 (as set out in Appendix 11c to the report) and note the circumstances under which commercial investments can be made;
- Approve the governance arrangements that are in place for proposing and approving commercial investments;
- Approve a maximum quantum for commercial investments of a further £20 million in 2020/21;
- Approve a maximum limit for an individual service investment loan of £10 million in 2020/21;
- Any upwards change in the amounts of the limits specified in the recommendations above relating to the maximum quantum for commercial investments and the maximum limit for an individual service investment loan be delegated to the County Treasurer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance.

(c) That the County Treasurer be authorised to adjust centrally held budgets or contributions to or from reserves as appropriate to reflect any grant changes announced in the final 2020/21 Local Government Finance Settlement;

(d) That the Cabinet Member for Finance and the County Treasurer be authorised to challenge Cabinet, the Senior Leadership Team and services to manage and deliver the current five-year plans and to identify further cost reductions and income generation opportunities, as appropriate.

(e) That the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive be authorised to finalise the details of the Strategic Plan 2020/21 prior to final publication to ensure that it reflects any changes to the management and accountability structures of the County Council as part of the organisation's transformation.

## **47. Statement of the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council presented a Statement outlining his recent work since the previous meeting of the Council. In introducing his statement, the Leader also informed the Council of the following additional matter:

### **HS2 Gets Green Light**

While the Prime Minister's announcement that HS2 will go ahead may not have been the news many wanted to hear, including here in Staffordshire, it does bring to an end years of uncertainty surrounding the future of the scheme.

From the outset our priority has been to get the best deal for this county and our communities in terms of mitigation, meaningful compensation, a share of any economic benefits and the offer of swifter, shorter rail journeys for Staffordshire residents.

In Phase One we secured some significant wins including the lowering of 8km of the line in Lichfield and the inclusion of the Handsacre Link in the Hybrid Bill to allow Staffordshire and neighbouring areas to access HS2 compatible trains via Stafford, improving connectivity to both the North and South

Although the Oakervee Review has recommended not proceeding with the link, to be clear this would require fresh legislation, would lead to further delays and legal challenges, Not to mention that in response to a question by Bill Cash MP, Boris Johnson gave his personal backing to Handsacre this week.

We welcome the Government's commitment to keep a tighter rein on the scheme, including the appointment of a dedicated HS2 Minister. And while the future of High Speed Rail was never in this council's gift we will remain focused on ensuring the voice of Staffordshire continues to be heard loud and clear along every step of the 45 miles that HS2 will now definitely run through this county.

### **Improving the Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People in Staffordshire**

(Paragraph 1 of the Statement)

Mrs Atkins enquired as to how the new contracts for the Emotional Health and Wellbeing services would be integrated with the "School Trailblazers". In response, Mr Flunder indicated that an All Party Working Group was looking at the "Trailblazers" project and would be reporting their findings to Cabinet in due course.

Mrs Edgeller informed the Council of the responses she had received from a group of looked after children when she met them recently and asked them about the negative and positive things which impacted on their mental health. She also asked Members to check with their local schools as to whether they provided a "quiet room" and also a dedicated individual children could talk to about mental health issues.

Mrs Woodward expressed concern that schools were not embedded in the Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategy. In response, Mr Sutton indicated that the Strategy aimed to ensure that children and young people could live independently and well and



that their aspirations were met. He added that the model had been developed jointly by the County Council and Clinical Commissioning Groups, with input from the young people themselves and also Scrutiny. Mr Sutton also explained that the Trailblazer project was not available in all schools but that he would let Members know how it would be integrated in the new contractual arrangements.

Mr Philip White also encouraged Members to become School Governors.

### **Regional Permanency Arrangement Development (Phase One)**

(Paragraph 2 of the Statement)

Mr Sutton informed Members of the progress which had been made to date with regard to the development of the Regional Permanency Arrangements between the County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council.

### **Award Approval for the Provision of a Framework to Provide a Driver Training Panel to Deliver the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) in Staffordshire**

(Paragraph 3 of the Statement)

Mr Tittley indicated that he welcomed the arrangements to deliver the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme in Staffordshire and indicated that in those areas of the Country where the scheme did not operate, Magistrates were often left with no opportunity to offer rehabilitation in place of a fine or other form of sentencing.

### **2020 – A New Decade**

(Paragraph 5 of the Statement)

Mr Robinson welcomed the various transport projects which were being developed across the County and indicated that he would welcome the support of the Leader of the Council in bringing pressure to bear on Network Rail in relation to the slow progress being made by them on improvements to Kingsgrove Railway Station.

Mr Smith referred to the pace of change and the need to ensure that training was available on new technologies to enable Staffordshire residents to be able to take advantage of job opportunities which may arise in the future. Mr McMahon indicated that he echoed the comments made by Mr Smith as, with changes in technologies, there would be “winners and losers” and that it was important that the County Council supported the “losers” by making available opportunities for re-training.

Mr Brookes referred to recent speculation on funding for an additional junction on the A50 at Uttoxeter and indicated that he supported the proposal.

Mr Sutherland referred to the success of the Kingswood Lakeside development in Cannock and explained that the business park stood on land which was previously part of an opencast coal mine but now provided office space for a range of businesses.

Mrs Trowbridge referred to the Council's investment in the Stafford Western Access Route (SWAR) and indicated that work on the Burleyfields development, which lay adjacent to the SWAR and would provide 1,500 new homes, was to commence today.

### **Official opening of Keele Business School and Smart Innovation Hub**

(Paragraph 6 of the Statement)

Mr Tagg, Mr Dave Jones, Mr Wileman, Mr Philip White and Mr Northcote referred to the success of the Keele Business Park/Science Park and outlined some of the benefits it had brought to the area and the local economy.

### **Holocaust Memorial Day**

(Paragraph 7 of the Statement)

Members welcomed the Council's proposal to join those local authorities who had agreed to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism. Mr Worthington also highlighted the need to ensure that the younger generations were encouraged to learn about the holocaust and other acts of genocide. Mrs Woodward added that, in her opinion, the Council's commemorations to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January were a missed opportunity to communicate with the public and to provide more information about the Holocaust and antisemitism.

Mrs Woodward also referred to the Members Code of Conduct and a question she had asked at the December 2019 Council Meeting as to what the Leader of the Council intended to do in order to show that the misuse of social media by Members would not be tolerated. She indicated that she had not received a response from the Leader. In response, Mr Atkins stated that he deplored the misuse of social media.

### **Dignity in Care Awards**

(Paragraph 8 of the Statement)

Mr Alan White and Mr Pert praised the valuable contribution made by carers across the County and asked Members to raise awareness of the Dignity in Care Awards and nominate those unsung heroes in their area.

### **Coronavirus**

(Paragraph 9 of the Statement)

Mr Alan White outlined ways in which to limit the spread of the Coronavirus and also highlighted the need for businesses and public services to have continuity plans in place.

Mrs Atkins enquired as to, if there was to be a pandemic, did the Council and the NHS have the necessary plans in place to tackle the issues which arose. In response, Mr Atkins confirmed that the necessary plans were in place and were being kept under review and revised as required.

## **Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire** (Paragraph 10 of the Statement)

Mr Alan White indicated that there were still entry places available for the Ironman event and added that it was a lovely course which high-lighted the beauty of Staffordshire.

Mrs Woodward referred to cost of hosting the Ironman event including the clean-up costs following the event, which often included removing human waste. She requested that the organisers of the event be asked to take steps to educate competitors not to leave such waste. Mr Atkins responded by indicating that he was sure that officers would notify the organisers of the event accordingly.

**RESOLVED** – That the Statement of the Leader of the Council be received.

### **48. Questions**

Mrs Atkins asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whose reply is set out below the question:-

#### **Question**

What progress has been made in reviewing the provision of school crossing patrols throughout the County? How many posts are currently vacant and where are they located? How many mobile patrols are presently being employed to cover vacancies?

#### **Reply**

A full review of the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) service was carried out in 2018/2019 to inform MTFS saving proposals. Further to consideration of feedback from consultations with schools, communities and staff, the decision was made not to implement the MTFS savings and to continue with the service on a business as usual basis.

Each SCP site is routinely assessed against national criteria on a biennial basis and, in addition, each site is reviewed when the incumbent Patrol has resigned or retired.

Despite community support for the service, it is often difficult to recruit to vacancies. The number of vacancies fluctuate on a week by week basis but there are currently 32 across Staffordshire (specifically at the locations listed below).

There are currently 12 Mobile Relief Patrols who are deployed on a priority basis across the county to cover predominantly short term and emergency absences of the regular Patrols. Recruitment is currently taking place to increase the number of Mobile Patrols to 15.

Schools are contacted by the SCP service to inform them of any absences and/or vacancies on their local Patrol points, so that parents and carers can be made aware.

In order to promote recruitment to vacancies as they arise, the SCP service utilise a Facebook page and have issued the Mobile Relief team with tabards especially designed to make local communities aware of the vacancy.

### **Current vacancies as at 07/02/2020**

#### **Newcastle and Moorlands**

A409 Chesterton  
A410 Priory Road/Abbot's Way Newcastle  
A315a Pepper St, Silverdale  
A435 Knutton Lane / Ashfields New Road, Newcastle  
A437 Church Lane, Wolstanton  
A614 Alexandra Road, Wolstanton  
A614a Alexandra Road, Wolstanton  
A491 Leek Road, Church Lane, Endon  
A429 - Loggerheads, Newcastle Rd  
A606a - Clayton Lane, Clayton High School, Newcastle  
A436 Seabridge Lane/Roe Lane Clayton  
A541 Wallbridge Drive Leek  
A464 Spring Gardens/Burton Street, Leek  
Mobile Relief Patrol - Leek  
A423 High St Maybank jct Upper Marsh (Zebra]  
A423a High St Maybank jct Upper Marsh (Zebra]

#### **Cannock, Rugeley and South Staffs**

B386a - Cannock Rd, Penkridge (canal bridge)  
B386 - Wolgarston Way, Penkridge  
B387a - Marsh Lane, Penkridge  
B072 - The Parkway, Perton  
378b - Walsall Rd, Norton Canes, for Jerome Primary  
B371 New Penkridge Rd, Hatherton  
Mobile relief x 2

#### **Stafford and Lichfield**

D155 Great Haywood  
D161 St Leonards Primary, Stafford  
D524 St Filumena's, Caverswall

#### **Tamworth and Burton**

E1 Branston Road/All saints Road, Burton-upon-Trent  
E021 Church Hill St/Eldon St, Winshill  
E206 Main St, Yoxall  
E216 Holly Road, Uttoxeter  
Mobile Relief - Burton-upon-Trent

### **Supplementary Question**

From your answer, it would appear that the review of the impact of the changes to school crossing patrol provision has not happened and I would ask you to look at this issue along with the methods of recruiting school crossing patrols?

### **Reply (by Mark Deaville on behalf of Helen Fisher)**

I can assure you that we don't have a half-hearted approach to recruiting school crossing patrols; and I will pass on your comments to Mrs Fisher including your request for an analysis of the service.

Mrs Woodward asked the following question of the Leader of the Council whose reply is set out below the question:-

### **Question**

The Leader's Advisory Group, set up to oversee the Action Plan arising from the Special Committees to exercise functions under the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, has not met since October 2018 yet many of the recommendations in the Action Plan are still to be implemented. Will the Leader undertake to reconvene this Group as soon as possible please?

### **Reply**

The majority of the recommendations have been implemented. I believe that the details are best discussed in the Advisory Group rather than at full Council, and I have asked the Chief Executive to arrange a meeting.

### **Supplementary Question**

I believe that there are a number of issues to still be resolved and may I have the Leader's assurance that the issues which remain outstanding will be dealt with as soon as possible?

### **Reply**

Yes.

Mr Robinson asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whose reply is set out below the question:-

### **Question**

Over two years ago, a housing developer went bust whilst building properties on Hurst Close in Talke Pits. The majority of properties were completed and occupied, but the process of adopting the road, pavement and grids was never completed and no funding was secured by the local authority during the liquidation stage of the company. This means the road and pavement on one side of Hurst Close has been left in a shocking state and the grids will get no future maintenance leaving residents

exposed to flooding. The community has been unable to find a solution to this matter due to cost and the fact a section of the road and pavement is not adopted means that private companies are reluctant to assist with any resurfacing work. Considering the road and pavement would have been adopted anyway, will the County Council finally step in and support the hardworking taxpayers of Hurst Close by adopting the unfinished sections and carrying out appropriate works to ensure they are in a suitable state to be used?

## **Reply**

This is a very localised and complex issue. Please can I recommend that the Local Member meets with me, as the Cabinet Member, and relevant lead officer to go through all the details and potential solutions. For completeness, however, please find a response below.

For clarity Hurst Close in Talke Pits is already adopted highway maintainable at public expense.

Several years ago a developer built 10 new houses on adjacent private land. During the planning approval process the Local Planning Authority consulted the County Council's highways team.

A series of recommendations were made, including: staged completion of some elements of work to an acceptable standard before occupation was allowed; and the requirement for a legal agreement containing suitable provisions to ensure that necessary alterations and widening of the existing public highway were made.

These requirements were then built into the planning permission. Responsibility for the enforcement of those conditions rests with the local Planning Authority.

Regrettably, the developer carried out the works without securing the required agreement and has subsequently gone into liquidation.

Where the existing public highway has been affected the County Council will continue to manage and maintain the relevant infrastructure. The County Council's legal team was not able to secure any funding through the liquidation process but is considering whether further enforcement action against the owner of the bankrupt company is possible.

With regards to the area of land that could be considered for adoption this is currently private land and serves as extra width to the existing publicly maintained footway. The affected residents have the option of continuing to manage this as private land or to fund the cost of bringing those areas up to standard and applying for them to become adopted public highways.

## **Supplementary Question**

It is obvious that the County Council is pushing the issue back onto the residents. Will the Cabinet Member do all she can to help to resolve this matter and find a way forward which is fair to our Council Tax payers?

### **Reply (by Mark Deaville on behalf of Helen Fisher)**

This is an unfortunate situation. I will pass on your comments to Mrs Fisher with a view to all the relevant parties meeting with the residents.

Mr Robinson asked the following question of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

#### **Question**

It has recently been highlighted that thousands of people in Staffordshire have not taken part in their free NHS bowel cancer screening tests. People aged between 60 and 74 years in England are sent a home test for bowel cancer every two years. It has been reported that 9,237 people out of 22,779 in the Cannock Chase CCG area and 9,894 people out of 27,065 in the Stafford and Surrounds CCG area had not taken up the test in the two-and-a-half years to March 2019. Will the Deputy Leader of the council and Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing ensure Staffordshire County Council does its bit to highlight the importance of eligible people taking part in this screening to diagnose disease early, hopefully leading to positive outcomes following treatment?

#### **Reply**

Bowel cancer is a common type of cancer with about 1 in 20 people developing it during their lifetime, and we may all know someone who has the disease. Screening can detect bowel cancer at an earlier stage, when it is more likely that it can be treated effectively.

There are two types of bowel cancer screening. The first is a home testing kit to collect a stool sample to test for blood, which is sent to people aged 60-74 every two years. The second is a thin, flexible camera used to examine the bowel, which is being rolled out as a one-off test to people aged 55.

In 2019, 62% of eligible people in Staffordshire took up bowel cancer screening using the home testing kit. This compares favourably to the national average of 60% and is an increase on the 2015 figure of 60% for the county.

The Council would like everyone who is eligible to take advantage of bowel cancer screening and we are happy to do our bit to raise awareness of this important screening programme.

More information for the public is available here:

[https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/downloadable-resources/bowel\\_cancer\\_screening\\_leaflet\\_-\\_file.pdf](https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/downloadable-resources/bowel_cancer_screening_leaflet_-_file.pdf)

#### **Supplementary Question**

Thank you for the response. We do however need to do more to encourage our residents to take-up the offer of screening.

## **Reply**

Thank you for raising the issue.

### **49. Petitions**

#### **(a) Request for repairs to Chapel Street, Butt Lane**

Mr Robinson presented a petition from local residents requesting the immediate repair of Chapel Street, Butt Lane.

**Chairman**