

Minutes of the County Council Meeting held on 15 May 2014

Present:

Attendance		
Ben Adams	Terry Finn	Mark Olszewski
George Adamson	John Francis	Ian Parry
Margaret Astle	Bob Fraser	Sheree Peuple
Charlotte Atkins	Michael Greateorex	Kath Perry
Philip Atkins	Sandra Hambleton	Trish Rowlands
Ann Beech	Gill Heath	Jeff Sheriff
Len Bloomer	Ian Hollinshead	David Smith
Frank Chapman	Derrick Huckfield	Mark Sutton
Ron Clarke	Kevin Jackson	Stephen Sweeney
Maureen Compton	Keith James	Simon Tagg
Chris Cooke	Brian Jenkins	John Taylor
Tim Corbett	Philip Jones	Martyn Tittley
Mike Davies	Mike Lawrence	Diane Todd
Peter Davies	Ian Lawson	Alan White
Derek Davis, OBE	David Loades	Conor Wileman
William Day	Robert Marshall	David Williams
Carol Dean	Geoff Martin	Mark Winnington
Mark Deaville	Shelagh McKiernan	Susan Woodward
Janet Eagland	Christine Mitchell	Caroline Wood
Brian Edwards	Geoff Morrison	Mike Worthington

Apologies for absence: Alan Dudson and Alison Spicer.

PART ONE

1. Election of the Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year

Mr Jones proposed, and Mr Francis seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED – That Mr I.S. Lawson be elected Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

2. Confirmation of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 March 2014

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2014 be confirmed.

3. Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year

Mr Finn moved, and Mr Worthington seconded, and it was:-

RESOLVED – That Mrs J. Eagland be appointed Vice-Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year.

4. Chairman's Correspondence

Former County Councillor Bob Ivinson

The Chairman informed the Council of the death on Thursday, 27 March 2014 of former County Councillor Bob Ivinson who represented the Uttoxeter Urban (East Staffordshire) County Electoral Division between 1997 and 2005.

Mr Ivinson served as a Member of the Council's Cultural and Recreational Services Group Committee, Countryside Services Committee, Arts and Heritage Services Committee, Education Group Committee, Continuing Education Committee, Curriculum Committee, Development Services Scrutiny Committee, Environment Scrutiny Committee and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. His funeral took place on 16 April 2014.

Members paid tribute to Mr Ivinson and then stood in silence in his memory.

New Civic Leads of District and Borough Councils

The Council extended their congratulations to Ron Clarke on his election as Mayor of East Staffordshire Borough Council and also to David Smith on his election as Chairman of Lichfield District Council.

Chairman's Civic Service

The Chairman extended an invitation to Members to attend his Civic Church Service which was to take place at St. Mary's Church, Stafford on Sunday, 15 June commencing at 11:30 am.

Excellence in Public Procurement Awards 2014/15

Members were informed that the County Council's Procurement Team were selected as finalists in the "GO! Procurement Innovation of the Year" category of the 2014/15 Excellence in Public Procurement Awards. This was in recognition of their work in leading the EU competitive dialogue for the successful delivery the UK's first and largest local government private sector Joint Venture with Capita - Entrust Support Services Ltd. The Entrust project involved a potential spend of £4 Billion, the letting of a 20 year service delivery agreement, the protection / TUPE transfer of around 5,000 Council employees to the Joint Venture company and will see the delivery of facilities management and educational services to Staffordshire's 400 schools.

5. Statement of the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council presented a Statement outlining his recent work and an overview of decisions taken by the Cabinet (and Portfolio Holders) since the previous meeting of the Council.

The Leader also announced that Simon Tagg had written to him indicating that he wished to step down from his role as a Cabinet Support Member so as to concentrate

on the launch of his new business. The Leader had therefore appointed Mark Deaville as Cabinet Support Member for Transport and Connected County with immediate effect.

The Leader also referred to the recent death of Stephen Sutton who had raised approximately £3.3M for the Teenage Cancer Trust and indicated that he had asked officers to investigate the possibility of creating a lasting legacy in recognition of Stephen's achievements.

A50 Growth Corridor

(Paragraph 1.1 of the Statement)

Several Members spoke in support of the proposals and the benefits they would bring to the Uttoxeter area. In response to a question from Mr Deaville about the need for highway improvements between the A50 and Cheadle, Mr Atkins confirmed that the County Council was in discussion with stakeholders in relation to improvements to the A522 between the A50 and Cheadle.

Household Waste Recycling Centre Consultation

(Paragraph 1.2 of the Statement)

Mr Jackson indicated that if the Bemersley Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) was to close, this would have a detrimental impact on residents of Biddulph, Brown Edge and Endon who would need to travel to Stoke-on-Trent to use facilities provided by Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Ms Woodward added that, despite the consultation being put on hold, over 2,000 local residents had signed a petition opposing the possible closure of the Burntwood HWRC. She sought a commitment that neither the Bemersley nor the Burntwood sites would be closed during the term of the current political administration. In response, Mr Winnington indicated that it was not possible to make such a commitment at this stage

Mr Greatorex referred Members to the situation in the Tamworth area where there were cross boundary arrangements in place which enable residents to use a HWRC in Warwickshire.

Mr Atkins also referred to the recent opening of the W2R plant at Four Ashes and indicated that this new facility would save the County Council around £250M over the next 25 years.

Achieving Excellence for Young People

(Paragraph 2.1 of the Statement)

Several Members expressed their concerns in relation to the Achieving Excellence for Young People proposals and the potential impact they would have on the number of Youth Workers employed by the County Council. Ms Atkins enquired whether there was likely to be a gap between the County Council ceasing its youth provision and the voluntary sector providing suitable alternative provision. Ms Peale enquired as to when Members would be consulted on the detailed proposals moving forward. In response, Mr Atkins stated that there would be a report back to Scrutiny by the end of October. Mr Sutton added that detailed work was now being carried out and that the necessary statutory consultations were taking place with those members of staff who

were affected by the proposals. Mr Parry indicated that the proposals were not about the County Council withdrawing from youth provision; it was about responding to the needs of young people in a better way. He added that currently, around 90% of youth provision was provided by the voluntary sector. Mr Francis added that the proposals were about young people deciding what provision they wanted rather than the County Council dictating what would be provided. Mr Marshall also added that the proposals were about the County Council using its financial resources to “kick-start” new youth provision.

Achieving Excellence for Early Years

(Paragraph 2.2 of the Statement)

Mrs Rowlands enquired whether the statutory requirements for consultation had been met during the “engagement exercise” on the Achieving Excellence in Early Years proposals. Mrs Compton sought an assurance that the staff affected by the proposals would be kept informed. In response, Mr Lawrence indicated that there would be a formal consultation period once the proposals had been formulated but that, currently, there were very few staff in Children’s Centre who were directly employed by the County Council as most of the services were now commissioned.

Better Care Fund

(Paragraph 2.3 of the Statement)

In response to questions from Members in relation to the Better Care Fund, Mr Marshall indicated that this was about working with partners across the public sector to make the best use of the pooled budget of around £56m and would involve looking for more community based solutions. In response to a question from Mr Clarke concerning how the Police were often called upon to deal with issues involving individuals with mental health problems, Mr White indicated that the County Council was working in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council on the development of a mental health strategy which would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration in July.

Ofsted Inspection Report

(Paragraph 2.4 of the Statement)

Mr Sutton paid tribute to the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board and staff from Families First following the recent announcement that the service and Board had both received a “good” rating by Ofsted following their inspection in January/February 2014. Mr Atkins also paid tribute to the contribution that had been made by Mr Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Children, Communities and Localism, and Richard Hancock, Head of Families First. Mr Lawrence added that, in recognition of the progress that had been made since the previous Ofsted Inspection, the Chairman of the County Council was to host an afternoon tea for representatives from the service and the Board.

Ms Wood referred to the recommendations contained in the Ofsted report and highlighted the need to take action to address the issue of excessive caseloads of the Independent Reviewing Officers.

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

6. Petition Re: Proposed removal and relocation of the façade of the Carr Gymnasium in Leek

The Chairman invited Mr Roger Warrilow, as lead petitioner, to address the Council on the petition opposing the proposal to relocate the façade of the Carr Gymnasium in Leek.

Following Mr Warrilow's presentation, Mr Atkins moved that as the original decision to relocate the façade was not a matter within the control of the County Council and had been subject to a democratic process at the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, there be no debate on the petition and that it be referred to Leek College for them to take account of the strength of opinion highlighted in the petition as the college development proceeded.

RESOLVED - That as the original decision to relocate the façade is not a matter within the control of the County Council and has been subject to a democratic process at the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, the petition be referred to Leek College for them to take account of the strength of opinion highlighted in the petition as the college development proceeds.

7. Notices of Motion

(a) Mr Adamson moved, and Ms Mitchell seconded, the following motion:

“This Council is opposed to the proposals by the Cannock Chase Clinical Commissioning Group to close the Minor Injuries Unit at Cannock Hospital. This Council calls on the Cannock Chase Clinical Commissioning Group to at least maintain the level of services at Cannock Hospital for the residents of Cannock Chase and surrounding areas”

Mr Adamson referred to the distressed health economy in Staffordshire and the anticipated overspend by the Cannock Chase Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which currently stood at £9.2m. He explained that the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) was well used and that its closure would be a false economy as local residents would be forced to use the Accident and Emergency Units at Stafford, Walsall and Wolverhampton Hospitals, which were much more expensive to run. Ms Mitchell spoke in support of the motion and referred to there being insufficient capacity for GPs to provide the support which would be lost as a result of the closure of the MIU as could be evidenced by the difficulty in getting a same day appointment with a GP.

Mr Loades indicated that the CCG's proposals had already been considered by the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee who had resolved “that the Clinical Commissioning Group be recommended to carry out a 12 week Public Consultation on the proposed closure of Minor Injuries Unit at Cannock Hospital.” He therefore suggested that Mr Adamson should withdraw his motion. Mr White indicated that he agreed with Mr Loades that the motion should be withdrawn. He also explained that the MIU was under-utilised and that many of the patients visiting the unit could have instead been treated by their GP or, in other cases, needed to be referred elsewhere for further examination such as for X-rays.

Following a debate, 15 members rose and called for a named vote, the result of which was as follows:

Those Members voting in support of the motion:

George Adamson	Carol Dean	Mark Olszewski
Margaret Astle	Sandra Hambleton	Sheree Peale
Charlotte Atkins	Ian Hollinshead	Trish Rowlands
Ann Beech	Derrick Huckfield	John Taylor
Ron Clarke	Brian Jenkins	Diane Todd
Maureen Compton	Shelagh McKiernan	Caroline Wood
Peter Davis	Christine Mitchell	Susan Woodward
Derek Davis		

Those Members voting against the motion:

Ben Adams	Bob Fraser	Kath Perry
Philip Atkins	Michael Greatorex	David Smith
Len Bloomer	Gill Heath	Mark Sutton
Frank Chapman	Keith James	Stephen Sweeney
Tim Corbett	Philip Jones	Simon Tagg
Mike Davies	Mike Lawrence	Martyn Tittley
Bill Day	Ian Lawson	Alan White
Mark Deaville	David Loades	Conor Wileman
Janet England	Robert Marshall	David Williams
Brian Edwards	Geoffrey Martin	Mark Winnington
Terry Finn	Geoff Morrison	Mike Worthington
John Francis	Ian Parry	

Abstentions:

Chris Cooke
Jeffrey Sheriff

RESOLVED – That the motion be not supported.

(b) Mr Atkins moved, and Mr Marshall seconded, the following motion:

“Staffordshire County Council has a crucial role to play in bringing everyone in Staffordshire together to improve the mental and physical health of all our communities and believes this should be a priority across all the local authority’s functions, from public health, adult social care and children’s services to our roles in housing, planning and public realm and the council will play a positive role in championing mental and public health on an individual and strategic basis”.

There then followed a wide ranging debate which, amongst other matters, made reference to the distressed health economy in Staffordshire; the need to secure value for money for every pound spent; the County Council’s role in relation to Public Health; and the way in which the County Council could influence the actions of other stakeholders.

Following a vote, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

RESOLVED – That Staffordshire County Council has a crucial role to play in bringing everyone in Staffordshire together to improve the mental and physical health of all our communities and believes this should be a priority across all the local authority's functions, from public health, adult social care and children's services to our roles in housing, planning and public realm and the council will play a positive role in championing mental and public health on an individual and strategic basis.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting until 2:15 pm.

Present at 2:15 pm:

Ben Adams	John Francis	Mark Olszewski
George Adamson	Bob Fraser	Ian Parry
Margaret Astle	Michael Greatorex	Sheree Peaple
Charlotte Atkins	Sandra Hambleton	Trish Rowlands
Philip Atkins	Gill Heath	Jeffrey Sheriff
Ann Beech	Ian Hollinshead	David Smith
Len Bloomer	Derrick Huckfield	Mark Sutton
Frank Chapman	Keith James	Stephen Sweeney
Ron Clarke	Brian Jenkins	John Taylor
Maureen Compton	Philip Jones	Martyn Tittley
Chris Cooke	Mike Lawrence	Diane Todd
Mike Davies	Ian Lawson	Alan White
Peter Davies	David Loades	Conor Wileman
William Day	Robert Marshall	David Williams
Mark Deaville	Geoff Martin	Mark Winnington
Janet Eagland	Shelagh McKiernan	Caroline Wood
Brian Edwards	Christine Mitchell	Susan Woodward
Terry Finn	Geoff Morrison	

8. Recommendations to Council

The Council considered a report of the Director of Democracy, Law and Transformation concerning proposed appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel; proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution; and proposals to reduce the size of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED - (a) That Leslie Trigg and Michael Murray be offered appointments to the Independent Remuneration Panel (subject to receipt of satisfactory references.)

(b) That:-

(i) The proposed amendments to paragraph 14.9 of Section 12 of the Constitution outlined in the report relating to the recording of votes at full County Council meetings on decisions on Budget and Precept setting; and

(ii) the proposed amendments to the Local Code of Conduct relating to registration of gifts and hospitalities, reference to the Planning Protocol and mechanisms for complaints, be approved.

(c) That:

(i) The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority be informed that the County Council supports their proposals to reduce the size of the Authority from 25 to 21 seats.

(ii) The following Members of the County Council be appointed to serve on the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority for the ensuing year:

Bloomer, L.	Hambleton, Mrs S.
Chapman, F.	Hollinshead, I.
Clarke, R.	Martin, G.
Davies, M.	Mitchell, Ms. C.
Davies, P.	Sweeney, S.
Day, W.	Wileman, C.
Finn, T.	Winnington, M.
Greatorex, M.	Wood, Ms. C.

9. Committee Membership (to be circulated at the meeting)

RESOLVED – That the members indicated below serve on the Committees indicated for the period up to the annual Council meeting in 2014:-

Corporate Review Committee	
Frank Chapman	Philip Jones
Carol Dean	Kath Perry
Brian Edwards	Simon Tagg
John Francis	John Taylor
Derrick Huckfield	Sue Woodward
Kevin Jackson	Mike Worthington
Brian Jenkins	

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee	
George Adamson	Brian Edwards
Ann Beech	Geoff Martin
Len Bloomer	Geoff Morrison
Maureen Compton	Martyn Tittley
Tim Corbett	Diane Todd

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee	
Margaret Astle	Mark Olszewski
Charlotte Atkins	Alison Spicer
Michael Davies	Stephen Sweeney
Terry Finn	Conor Wileman
John Francis	David Williams

Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee	
Charlotte Atkins	Christine Mitchell
Chris Cooke	Sheree People
Bob Fraser	Kath Perry
Michael Greatorex	Trish Rowlands
Philip Jones	David Smith
David Loades	Mike Worthington
Shelagh McKiernan	

Planning Committee	
Ron Clarke	Geoff Martin
Chris Cooke	Geoff Morrison
Tim Corbett	Shelagh McKiernan
Alan Dudson	Trish Rowlands
John Francis	Jeff Sheriff
Sandra Hambleton	David Smith
Ian Lawson	David Williams
David Loades	

Pensions Committee	
Margaret Astle	Mike Lawrence
Philip Atkins	Robert Marshall
Derek Davis	Shelagh McKiernan
Alan Dudson	Stephen Sweeney
Bob Fraser	

Audit and Standards Committee	
Derek Davis	Alison Spicer
Bill Day	Simon Tagg
Janet Eagland	Martyn Tittley
Michael Greatorex	Diane Todd
Derrick Huckfield	Conor Wileman
Kevin Jackson	Caroline Wood
Keith James	Mike Worthington
Philip Jones	

Corporate Parenting Panel	
Peter Davies	Mike Lawrence
Bill Day	David Loades
Janet Eagland	Geoff Martin
Terry Finn	Geoff Morrison
Michael Greatorex	Trish Rowlands
Gill Heath	Jeff Sheriff
Sandra Hambleton	Caroline Wood
Ian Hollinshead	

Charities and Trusts Committee	
Tim Corbett	Sandra Hambleton
Peter Davies	Stephen Sweeney
Brian Edwards	

10. Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees (to be circulated at the meeting)

In response to a question from Mr Jenkins concerning how the Council could be kept informed of the work of its Select Committees, Mr Atkins indicated that he would discuss this matter with the Leader of the Opposition and, if necessary, refer the matter to the Members Services Development Panel for consideration.

RESOLVED – That the under-mentioned be appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committees stated for the period up to the annual Council meeting in 2015:-

Corporate Review Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Philip Jones
Simon Tagg

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Brian Edwards
Martyn Tittley

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

John Francis
David Williams

Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Kath Perry
David Loades

Planning Committee

Chairman	Tim Corbett
Vice-Chairman	David Smith

Pensions Committee

Chairman	Stephen Sweeney
Vice-Chairman	Bob Fraser

Audit and Standards Committee

Chairman	Mike Worthington
Vice-Chairman	Keith James

Corporate Parenting Panel

Chairman	Mike Lawrence
Vice-Chairman	Janet Eagland

11. Appointment of Members to Outside Bodies 2014/15 (to be circulated at the meeting)

RESOLVED – That the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, be authorised to approve the appointment of members to Outside Bodies for 2014/15 and. subsequently to make any changes to those appointments as necessary.

12. Report of the Chairman of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Mr P. Davies sought the support of Members in persuading local planning authorities to bring pressure to bear on developers to install sprinkler systems in new domestic and commercial premises as a means of reducing the number of fire fatalities per year.

RESOLVED – That the Periodic Report of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority be received.

13. Questions

Mrs M. Compton asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Children, Communities and Localism whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

I understand that the Early Years' budget has reduced from £22 million in 2009/2010 to £12.4 million in £2013/14. What are the consequences for Early Years and Early Education of a budget cut of £10 million?

Reply

The consequence of changes in government grants is that we have become more focused on targeted intervention with families that need it, developing provision at a local level, and working with our partners to provide the best outcomes in the community.

By focusing on the outcomes that our children need, innovating and finding better ways to work together with partners, we have faced the challenge of shrinking resources and increased demand.

The transformation of children's services social care services into Families First saw some efficiency savings, but this wasn't the main driver of change – it was about changing the system so that the right children get the right help at a the right time. The change moved us from a traditional hierarchical service based system to one of locality based resources that were allocated on need. Improvement at the early years foundation stage, better planning, better information sharing, improved use of resources and customised approaches to communities were all consequences.

Today we see vast improvements in standards of nursery provision, with 84% of Staffordshire's settings being rated by Ofsted as either 'good' or 'outstanding'

Our priority remains ensuring children have the best start in life, because, in the long run, that is not only the best outcome for the child and their family, but for the authority too.

We also intend, through our work in achieving excellence in Early Years, to ensure that there every 0-5 year olds has the best start in and are school ready, not just those who are vulnerable.

Supplementary Question

There has been a reduction of 47 people in the last four years working in the Early Years and Early Education Teams. There used to be 114, there are now 67. I just want to ask, what are the consequences for the staff and the work that they do in this reduction of 47 staff over the last four years?

Reply

I have not got those figures available and in front of me so I will respond to you in writing.

Note by clerk: Mr Lawrence provided Mrs Compton with the following written response:

The numbers of staff working directly with children and families on the front-line were protected, and have not reduced as a result of changes to early years provision.

The staffing changes were the result of changes to support functions, some of which had reached their objectives or there were changes in external funding. – e.g. the work of the Children’s Fund. Others from the School Improvement Service transferred to Entrust and continue to perform their role. The changes of staffing at a management level were not solely across early years but across Families First Early Help; the changes from a single service delivery model to a multidisciplinary delivery model have led to a more efficient system which has stripped out much duplication. This has subsequently led to more effective staff supervision and better and more focused management. Case loads are still being managed effectively, and have not increased as a direct result of these changes.

The breadth of work that front line staff undertake is now wider, but this is the result of the individual needs of our targeted families rather than a lack of professional support.

Mrs S. Woodward asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

At the Council meeting in March, the Cabinet Member confirmed that only around 3.5% of the Local Crisis Support Scheme fund of £1,475,587 for April 2013 - March 2015 had been spent on direct crisis support, a total of £52,637. He also indicated that £498,700 has been allocated to crisis prevention schemes. Can he tell me please:

- a) how much has now been spent on direct crisis support;
- b) how many people have now received help;
- c) when will the proposed crisis prevention schemes start operating;
- d) and what is planned for the further £900,000 (approximately) remaining in the fund?

Reply

(a) To date £66,090.00 has been spent on direct crisis support.

(b) We have had 585 successful applications supporting 540 individuals.

(c) (i) The Casserole Club local community meal sharing network was launched on 30.04.14 and will be fully operational in the Districts of South Staffordshire, Lichfield and Tamworth by 19.05.14. This will be extended to the rest of the County by 01.06.14.

(ii) The Public Health facilitated intergenerational cooking clubs, menu planning and budget awareness programmes have been commissioned locally with a multi-agency approach. All grants have been awarded to successful applicants with implementation of schemes expected to commence by end of June 2014.

(iii) The Social Isolation and Loneliness scheme *Uniting Staffordshire* will commence in September 2014 with successful providers delivering local

support from January 2015. Please refer to the response given to County Council Meeting 15th May 2014 Question 5.

- (d) (i) Carer Specific Programmes - These will prevent and limit Carer experience of crisis to the value of £147,800.
- (ii) Debt Prevention - Work is underway to explore how the crisis fund can be used to tackle issues of debt, including legal and illegal money lending. This will involve working with Credit Unions and the National Illegal Money Lending Team.
- (iii) Environmental Crisis - Scoping work is underway to explore how the crisis fund can be used to support people who experience crisis as a result of severe adverse weather conditions as experienced recently across the Country. This will involve exploring practical, emotional and humanitarian support in partnership with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Civil Contingencies Unit initially.
- (iv) Returning to Work - This will support those securing employment with travel, food and utility bills until their first pay is received. Typical package may include a Staffordshire CC travel pass for up to one month, a supermarket food delivery and fuel support. This helps those that may not have taken employment due to having no money available and not being able to afford to travel to work.
- (v) Examples of good practice from around the Country are being gathered to inform future commissioning intentions.

Supplementary Question

I notice from the information given in “(a)” that we have now spent around 4.4% of the crisis fund. It has risen from 2.4% at the beginning of the year, 3.5% in March and 4.4% now. So the levels of spend don’t correlate to the level of need that we know is out there. A lot of the crisis prevention scheme, it seems to me, is about “jam tomorrow” or perhaps not “jam tomorrow” but “bread tomorrow”. I will continue to ask these sorts of questions to ensure that they are being addressed. My particular question I want to pose to Councillor Marshall is one I actually sent to him in an email on 1 March. I pointed out to him that Councillor Adamson and I on that day visited the Pye Green Christian Centre in Hednesford which operates both a food bank scheme and the local crisis support scheme. We both found it very enlightening. Did he know, for example, that the Pye Green Christian Centre is acting countywide on behalf of Staffordshire County Council. They helped 73 people across the whole of Staffordshire in April this year; and they handle through their centre about one ton of food per week; and supported over 3,800 families over the year April 2013 to March 2014. A number of concerns were raised to us by the people who operate the scheme, mainly volunteers, and I asked the question whether the Cabinet Member could spare an hour or so to meet Councillor Adamson and myself there. Would that be possible please?

Reply

I fully accept that I haven’t replied to your request to meet you and Mr Adamson and yes, I absolutely will.

Ms S. People asked the following question of the Leader of the Council whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Will the Leader join with me, and my colleagues in the Labour Group, in deploring the comments of Councillor Mike Worthington at the Corporate Review Committee on Tuesday 15 April, in which he denigrated both the youth service itself and the young people of Staffordshire by suggesting a link between youth club attendance and teenage pregnancy, and by calling the youth service "damn silly." Does the Leader agree with me that Councillor Worthington's remarks were unhelpful, ill-informed and uncalled for?

Reply

Mr Worthington and I have discussed this matter, I have also seen Mr Worthington's contribution to the debate on the webcast and spoken to others who were at the meeting. He has assured me that as he began to make his comments to the committee he was repeatedly interrupted and unable to express the points he wished to make clearly.

I am therefore satisfied that your interpretation of Mr Worthington's comments is based on an incomplete contribution and therefore taken out of context.

In a democracy you have debate and as Leader I have to accommodate many, sometimes differing views. However Achieving Excellence for Staffordshire Children is something I hope we all agree on.

Supplementary Question

I was quite strictly brought up and I was taught that when you make a mistake and get something wrong you put your hand up to it and apologise. I am very disappointed that the reply I have had from the Leader appears not to want to do that. I've watched the webcast three times. Councillor Worthington was not interrupted. He made a speech which upset a number of the young people present. I am very disappointed that we have not had an apology to those people from the Leader. So my question is - was the Leader watching the same webcast as I was?

Reply

I was.

Ms S. McKiernan asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Staffordshire has an increasing population of older people, and the number of residents over 75 is expected to double by 2033.

In view of the dangers which loneliness poses to the health of elderly residents in particular, what are the specific measures the County Council are taking to deal with it?

Reply

I absolutely agree with Mrs. McKiernan that the dangers associated with loneliness are a major issue for Staffordshire.

Social isolation and loneliness can be a serious issue not just for older people, the impact can include mental and physical ill health. The council is committed to tackling the issue, and we have taken a range of steps to ensure that we are supporting older people in Staffordshire.

We have developed a 'Social Isolation and Loneliness' business case and are now gathering customer insight to help us develop our commissioning intentions to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

We have already commissioned a number of existing schemes:-

The 'Up for a Chat' campaign, run between January and April of 2014, saw nearly 100 individuals and over seventy businesses across Staffordshire volunteer to reduce social isolation in older people. Supported by us, and following appropriate safeguarding checks, those people were guided and supported to generate meaningful relationships with potentially lonely and isolated individuals. Since the campaign ended in March we've received lots of positive feedback from both volunteers and the people they chatted to, and we are considering how to take this approach forward.

We also commission befriending schemes, provided by Royal Voluntary Service, Age UK and Polish Centre, and lunch clubs to support lonely isolated individuals.

We are working with each District to offer their own individual scheme to address social isolation and loneliness. For example, South Staffordshire already has a Good Neighbourhood Scheme in place.

Finally, the Casserole Club project helps people share extra portions of home-cooked food with others in their area who might not always be able to cook for themselves. Like a local, community-led takeaway, members serve up meals to their neighbours, getting more people cooking fresh food while strengthening local neighbourhood relationships and reducing social isolation and loneliness.

Supplementary Question

I am very interest to learn more about the 'Social Isolation and Loneliness' business case and the other initiatives you mention and how they may be applied in my division. What I am concerned about is how they are to be funded. This Council has to make massive savings in order to balance its budget. How can you ensure

that the needs of lonely and socially isolated older people are prioritised over all the other major issues the Council has to address?

Reply

I think I hinted earlier in the Chamber that trying to maximise the wellbeing of our elderly people is one of the key priorities for this Council and indeed our health economy because if we can minimise the money spent on the expensive care for these people, I think that it is a big step towards curing our problems. Specifically, one of the problems you talk about here is loneliness. I fully accept that people, living on their own and are lonely, even if they have plenty of money, can be at risk of mental illness and depression. So that is why I have tried to put down as much as I can in my answer – to give you an idea of some of the schemes that are going on to combat loneliness.

It is one of these hidden evils in society and if everyone can do their bit, I think that would be a big step towards what you are looking for.

Ms C. Atkins asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Care whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Who is the County Council consulting about the proposals contained within the Supporting People Review?

Reply

Consultation on the proposals for the Supporting People budget to date have been with key internal stakeholders, partner organisations including the Partnership Trust, the Police and Crime Commissioner and District councils, and provider organisations. The Supporting People review is complex, and in order to achieve the best results for local people – and clarity around how individuals may be affected - we are talking to those organisations directly involved initially, before working with provider organisations to broaden our discussions out to those people who currently use the provided services and wider stakeholders.

The proposal to review the contracts was approved by Cabinet following 'call in' on the 11th March and local councillors have received face to face briefings. District Commissioning Leads are regularly briefed as the proposals develop to ensure they can keep local stakeholders, including Members, fully informed and involved.

The majority of this consultation has been done through face to face meetings but there have also been workshops internally and with Sheltered Housing and Community Alarm providers who subsequently received written correspondence asking them for their views on the proposals.

Further briefings and workshops are being scheduled with partner organisations and all the providers will have been met, on a 1-2-1 basis, by the end of May. Many of these providers have already begun to discuss the issue with the people who use

their services. A detailed list of engagement to date is available and the involvement of Members of all parties is welcome at every stage of this review to ensure that, collectively, we are supporting vulnerable people in our communities.

Supplementary Question

You do mention at the end of your response the involvement of service users. But what I am concerned about is that service users should be at the centre of the process; and do you agree that it is absolutely vital that service users are consulted; and what will you do to ensure that providers, and we directly, talk to service users because they are the ones who will really know the impact these changes will have on them at home. If we are trying to boost community provision, the only way we can get this right is by talking directly to service users.

Reply

Clearly the most important people in the whole process are those who will be most directly affected by any changes to the services provided under the Supporting People programme; and it is vital that their voice is heard. The organisations who provide the services, whom we support with funding, clearly have a responsibility to work with their clients. With our guidance, they will be able to use existing relationships to work with people, many of whom will be vulnerable, to reshape their service to ensure the best quality and best value support is provided.

Ms C. Atkins asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Care whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

What progress is being made with creating new Dementia Centres of Excellence within Staffordshire?

Reply

We have taken feedback into consideration, and whilst we appreciate that this may not be everyone's desired solution, we believe that the Dementia Centres of Excellence project will improve care for people living with dementia in Staffordshire. We have carried out a procurement process in order to find the right provider for the new centres, and following a rigorous process, the remaining bidder, Symphony, submitted their final bid at the end of March 2014. Since then the project team have been evaluating each individual element of the bid before making a recommendation about whether or not to award them with 'preferred bidder' status. A final business case is due to be taken to Cabinet in June 2014, for a decision to be taken.

Alongside this process, work is also continuing regarding Knivedon Hall in Leek. Consideration is being given to whether a Dementia Centre of Excellence will be developed on that site in the future by Symphony, should they be awarded the contract. A decision on this will be made by the Property Board in June 2014.

Supplementary Question

Being the Member for Leek South, I am particularly concerned about what is happening in Leek. Councillor White may be aware that over four years an agreement was signed between the County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, in March 2010, in a blaze of publicity to say that they had agreed that a centre of excellence for dementia was going to be created. Four years on, Leek seems nowhere near achieving this much needed facility. So I want to ask what criteria will be considered in determining the location of a centre of excellence for dementia and is the agreement between the two Councils worth the paper it is written on?

Reply

It is the case in life that sometimes, when ambition confronts reality, reality bites harder than expected. To that end, it remains an ambition to deliver dementia centres of excellence across the County, including in Leek. However, the process of bringing that forward is going to longer than perhaps Mr Ellis might have considered in 2010 because commercial realities and the availability of funding means that these sorts of projects cannot be brought forward as quickly as I would have hoped and anticipated. I am afraid that I cannot answer the second part of your question about the criteria for determining the location of dementia centres now as I do not have that information to hand. I will therefore respond to you in writing.

Note by clerk: Mr White provided Ms Atkins with the following written response:

I write in response to your supplementary question submitted at County Council on 15 May with respect to the criteria for determining sites for Centres of Excellence.

The primary aims of the project is to provide people with dementia with a homely environment in which to live, to provide excellent care, to help them to live their lives with dignity and promote choice and enable individuals to live as independently as they are able. Location sites for the Centres of Excellence should directly support these principles.

We aim to create a range of services which will support a holistic care pathway for people with dementia, ensuring residents, carers, friends and families and local communities are able to access dementia care services in order to meet their needs.

When determining sites for the Centres, consideration was given to:

- Proximity to local amenities/town centre (shops, restaurants, places of worship, bank, post office, open spaces, leisure facilities etc.) so people living in the Centres can easily enjoy the benefits of the local community, if they so wish.
- Proximity to local bus and rail transport links and road networks, to provide ease of access to the Centres for staff, carers, friends and families and members of the local community.

- Provision of a site of a sufficient size to allow the provision of a building of a suitable size, to enable the delivery of the accommodation, facilities and services required to meet project aims.
- Proximity to local healthcare services such as GP, hospital, dentist etc.
- Sources of local environmental and noise pollution, to ensure Centres are not built in areas of high noise or pollution (where this cannot be mitigated).
- Local topography, to ensure Centres are not built on adversely high or sloping land, as some residents may have physical impairments or disabilities which would make mobility and/or wheelchair access difficult.

I trust this information answers your question fully however please contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

14. Petitions

(i) Request for Traffic Signals at the Junction of Arnold Grove/Clare Avenue and for Safety Cameras along Bradwell Lane, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Mrs Hambleton presented a petition from local residents, requesting the installation of Traffic Signals at the Junction of Arnold Grove/Clare Avenue and for Safety Cameras along Bradwell Lane, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

(ii) Petition opposing the possible closure of Biddulph Household Waste Recycling Centre

Mr Lawson presented a petition from local residents opposing the possible closure of Biddulph Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Chairman