

Minutes of the County Council Meeting held on 10 October 2013

Present:

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

Apologies for absence: Margaret Astle, Ann Beech, Ron Clarke, Maureen Compton, Peter Davies, Carol Dean, Kath Perry, Jeff Sheriff and Caroline Wood

PART ONE

3. Confirmation of the minutes of the Ordinary and Extraordinary Council meetings held on 25 July 2013

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting and Extraordinary Council Meeting, both held on 25 July 2013, be confirmed.

4. Chairman's Correspondence

Alderman Frank William Lewis MBE JP

The Chairman informed the Council of the death, on Tuesday, 24 September 2013 of Alderman Frank William Lewis MBE JP who was a Member of the County Council between May 1977 and May 2013 and represented the Lichfield Rural West County Electoral Division.

Mr Lewis was awarded an MBE in 2006 for his service to Local Government. During the 36 years he was a Member of the County Council he served on a wide range of the

Council's Committees including Policy and Resources, County Farms and Agriculture, Development Services Group, Highways and Transportation, Waste Disposal, Public Protection, Planning and Regulatory Committees.

Mr Lewis was also a Member of the Staffordshire Police Authority and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Fire and Rescue Authority. He was elected Chairman of the County Council between 2011 and 2012 and, following his retirement from the Council in May, was awarded the status of Honorary Alderman in July 2013.

Members paid tribute to Alderman Lewis and then stood in silence in his memory.

APSE Service Awards 2013

Members were informed that the County Council won the "Best Partnership Working initiative (Public/Private Partnership Working)" category in the 2013 Association of Public Service Excellence Service Awards in recognition of the work of the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership. The Partnership brought together expertise from the public and private sectors to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the County's road network. It worked to raise awareness about road safety, to monitor vehicle safety issues and to encourage safe and responsible road use.

The County Council was also short-listed in the following three categories of the Awards:

- Best Employment and Equality Initiative
- Best Local Democracy Initiative
- Best Service Team of the Year (Highways, Winter Maintenance and Street Lighting Service)

Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) Supply Management Awards

The Chairman also informed Members that the County Council had won the "Best Public Sector Procurement Project" award at the 2013 Chartered Institute for Purchasing and Supply (CIPS) Supply Management Awards for the Education Support Services (ESS) Joint Venture Procurement. These awards were the most prestigious awards for procurement, covering the private and public sector. The project involved a spend of £4 Billion, the letting of a 20 year service delivery agreement with Entrust, and the protection / TUPE transfer of around 5,000 Council employees to the Joint Venture Company.

Federation of Small Businesses Award – Best Small Business Friendly Procurement Policy

The Council noted that Staffordshire Procurement had also recently received an award from the Federation of Small Businesses for having the Best Small Business Friendly Procurement Policy. The award was given based on the work undertaken by Staffordshire Procurement to increase SME access to, participation in and win Council tenders. The work was not project based or a one off, but an on-going commitment to supporting SMEs in bidding for and winning SCC contracts. This was the second consecutive year in which Staffordshire Procurement had won this award.

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.

Mid-Staffordshire Hospital

(Paragraph 1.1 of the Statement)

Mr Adamson welcomed the recommendations of the Administrators which, if accepted, would result in Cannock Hospital being retained. He added that he shared Members concerns over the proposals to reduce the number of services available from Stafford Hospital and expressed the view that as many services as possible should be retained. Ms Woodward and Ms Atkins referred to the complex health economy in Staffordshire and indicated that they did not support the Leader's preferred option for a single acute Trust to serve the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent as this would reduce patient choice and would not necessarily be any cheaper to run than retaining the two Trusts. Ms Atkins and Mrs Rowlands also referred to the possible revenue implications for the University Hospital of North Staffordshire if Stafford Hospital was to be "downgraded" and the need for the government to confirm that they would "pick up the bill". Mrs Rowlands expressed the view that the proposal for a Midwife led maternity Unit at Stafford Hospital would not cater for the needs of residents. She also expressed concern about the additional travel costs which would be incurred by patients should some services cease to be provided at Stafford Hospital and be transferred elsewhere.

Mr Atkins thanked Members for their comments. He indicated that Cannock Hospital came out of the Administrator's proposals fairly well. He also reminded Members that the problems were not limited to Stafford and Burton Hospital was under Special Measures. Mr Atkins also outlined the preventative work undertaken by the County Council to keep people out of hospital and also the reablement work which enabled patients to return to their homes as quickly as possible after receiving treatment in hospital. He also expressed the view that one Acute Trust for Staffordshire could work well and he stressed the need for the various partners, including the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Clinical Commissioning Groups, to work together to improve the health of Staffordshire residents. Mr Atkins concluded by indicating that, in his view, the model proposed by the Administrators was unsustainable and that the County Council needed to work together with its partners in the health sector to come up with something better.

High Speed Rail 2 Phase One: Consultation Response

(Paragraph 2.1 of the Statement)

Several Members spoke in support of the County Council's stance on HS2 including the support it was giving to Staffordshire communities who would be adversely affected by the project, its proposals to mitigate the impact of the new railway line on the local environment in Staffordshire and its support for fair compensation to be paid to those individuals directly affected by HS2.

Ms Peale expressed concern at the spiralling costs of the scheme and suggested that the government should not issue HS2 with a blank cheque.

Mr Atkins thanked Members for their comments and added that it was important that the voice of local communities were heard and, if the scheme were to proceed, to mitigate against its impact on the Staffordshire Countryside.

Portfolio Holder Delegated Decisions

(Paragraph 3.5 of the Statement)

In response to a question from Mr Hollinshead in relation to consultation with Members over the closure of several Day Care Centres, Mr Marshall indicated that there had been wide consultation on the proposals and that Service Users had been assisted in finding suitable alternative provision.

Ms Woodward referred to the proposals to sell packages of accommodation and attractions to consumers under the Enjoy Staffordshire brand and she highlighted some of the local tourist attractions in and around the Burntwood area. Mr Winnington responded by indicating that he was excited about this new tourism offer in Staffordshire and he outlined a number of the ways in which the County Council, with its partners in the local tourism industry would be trying to attract people to spend their vacations and days out in Staffordshire to the benefit of the Staffordshire economy.

In response to a question from Mr Jenkins in relation to Early Years provision, Mr Marshall indicated that the provision of nursery care from Children's Centres was not a statutory requirement. He added that the County Council had reviewed such provision and had agreed arrangements whereby, in the future, the service would be provided by two private sector providers.

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

6. Notices of Motion

Mr Sutton moved, and Mr Tagg seconded, the following motion:-

“This Council supports the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) strategy ‘Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire 2013-2018’ and the overwhelming (89% overall) support it has received from the public.

We welcome in particular the four priorities;

- Early Intervention
- Supporting Victims and Witnesses
- Managing Offenders and
- Public Confidence

We look forward to working with the PCC, the public and partners in developing and delivering operational plans to make a real and sustained difference to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving community safety in Staffordshire.”

Mr Adamson expressed concern that the PCC had announced, at a recent meeting in Cannock, plans to reduce the number of Police Officers in Staffordshire despite saying 12 months ago that he would increase their number. Mr Adamson also indicated that he welcomed the extension of partnership working with the police and cited the example of the Police moving into office accommodation at the Civic Offices in Cannock. He also indicated that, although crime rates continued to fall, the fear of crime did not.

Several Members spoke in support of the motion. Mr Parry welcomed the PCC’s proposals to put resources into frontline policing and his intention to work with partners around sharing back office functions.

Mr Taylor expressed concern at the delivery arrangements for the Plan. He also asked how the Police would be working differently to reduce the risk of children being abused or, potentially, being killed in Staffordshire. Mr Adams responded by indicating that he had a lot of confidence in the Plan. He cited examples of where the Police was working with partners to safeguard young people such as through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Mr Adams also outlined the importance of the partners working together around early intervention and tackling underlying issues. He also welcomed the PCC’s commitment to work with local Community Safety Partnerships.

Mr Tagg welcomed the initiatives that had been introduced by the PCC including the drive to reduce the number of targets, the free policing of community events, the road safety “crackdown” on insurance dodgers, the launch of the Police Cadets Scheme and the “Let’s Talk” events.

In responding to the debate, Mr Sutton informed the Council that, with regard to child abuse and child exploitation, on 2 December 2013 there was to be a Community Safety Day where Members would have an opportunity to see “Chelsea’s Choice”, a play produced by a professional drama company using young adults to portray a really difficult message. He added that the play was being rolled out to all Year 8 pupils across Staffordshire.

Following a vote, the Chairman declared the motion carried.

RESOLVED – That this Council supports the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (PCC) strategy ‘Safer, Fairer, United Communities for Staffordshire 2013-2018’ and the overwhelming (89% overall) support it has received from the public.

We welcome in particular the four priorities;

- Early Intervention
- Supporting Victims and Witnesses
- Managing Offenders and

- Public Confidence

We look forward to working with the PCC, the public and partners in developing and delivering operational plans to make a real and sustained difference to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and improving community safety in Staffordshire.

7. Recommendations to the Council

(a) Independent Remuneration Panel Appointment

Members were informed that the County Council was required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to provide advice and recommendations to the Council on its Members' Allowances Scheme.

The County Council, at its meeting 15 March 2013, extended the period of office for Ray Betteridge, Jane Landick, Gerald Griffin and Ian Starkie as members of the Independent Remuneration Panel for a further period of 12 months to 31 March 2014. Arrangements therefore needed to be made to appoint new members to the Panel upon the expiry of the term of office of the current Panel members.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Audit and Standards Committee be requested to make the necessary arrangements to advertise the vacancies for the appointment of members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

(b) That the Audit and Standards Committee be given delegated authority to appoint a special committee of five members to select the preferred candidates to fill the vacancies on the Independent Remuneration Panel.

(c) That the Special Committee consist of five members of the Audit and Standards Committee to be nominated by the Leaders of the Controlling group and the Major Minority group on the Council.

(b) Staffordshire County Council Constitution – Proposed amendments and additions

Members were informed that the Audit and Standards Committee had made recommendations for changes to the County Council's constitution in respect of the following:

- Proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive
- Establishment of a Charities and Trusts Committee
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Panel and the Quorum for Sub-Committees/Panels

RESOLVED - That:

(a) The recommendations of the Audit and Standards Committee meeting on 16 September 2013 in relation to the following be approved:

- (i) The Scheme of Delegation to the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive
- (ii) The establishment of a Charities and Trusts Committee
- (iii) Amendments to the Constitution in relation to the Countryside and Rights of Way Panel and the quorum for Sub-Committees/Panels

(b) That the Council appoints 5 members to serve on the Charities and Trust Committee and that the appointment of those Members be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Group Leaders.

8. Report of the Chairman of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel

The Chairman of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel outlined the role of Panel, how it was constituted and its powers.

He added that the Panel had been consulted on the Police and Crime Plan for Staffordshire and the Police and Crime Commissioner had taken on Board the Panel's response. He also indicated that the Panel had completely endorsed the principles set out in the Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Periodic Report of the Staffordshire Police and Crime Panel be received.

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

The Chairman of the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority informed the Council that the FBU strike was still to be resolved.

Ms Woodward welcomed the news that work had commenced on Chase Terrace Fire Station following the final close of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) 2.

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

10. Questions

Mr C. Cooke asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Given that -

- it was well over 60 years ago that it was decided that water fluoridation at 1 part per million was the “optimum” level for preventing cavities in children;
- since that time most toothpaste now has an added fluoride content of around 1,500 parts per million;

- American Health Authorities have now reduced the recommended fluoridation content of its water supplies from 1 part per million to 0.7 parts per million and is also recommending that babies are not fed fluoridated water;
- Ireland also has reduced its water fluoride levels to 0.7 parts per million;
- hexafluorosilicic acid, the chemical used to fluoridate, is a dangerous industrial waste product, itself with up to 2% heavy metal pollutants, and is a poison listed in Part 2 of the Poisons Act 1972;
- fluoride these days is found to be in much greater quantities than previously suspected in the environment, with up to 180 parts per million in non-organic UK food as a result of fluoride-containing pesticides being used;
- all sides are now agreed that fluoride only works – if it works at all – topically on the surface of the tooth and not through ingestion;

and given the resulting undisputed health problems of dental and skeletal fluorosis as well as many other disputed health concerns; now that fluoridation has become the competency and responsibility of this County Council, will the Health Portfolio holder assure me that he will review, or will initiate a Council review, of the estimated £200,000 this council will spend each year on this water fluoridation programme in Tamworth and South Staffordshire with a view to either following the USA and Ireland into reducing the level of water fluoridation, or to possibly using the money elsewhere in other dental health interventions that can be better targeted towards population needs?

Reply

Overall 5 year olds in Staffordshire County continue to enjoy some of the best dental health in England.

Water supplies in Southern Staffordshire have been fluoridated since the mid to late 1980s.

5 year olds living in Cannock Chase, Tamworth and East Staffordshire enjoy better dental health than the England average – in contrast to some of their general health ratings.

497,000 people in the south and east of Staffordshire are supplied with fluoridated water at a cost of c£200k – 40 pence per person per year.

There is no evidence that alternative methods of reducing dental decay levels would be as effective or as cost-effective as this water fluoridation scheme.

Fluoridated water works both systemically and topically; water fluoridation is more effective especially for high risk communities as it does not require behaviour change. It has been shown to have a positive impact on reducing inequalities in dental health.

There is no evidence of the harmful effects from water fluoridation raised by Councillor Cooke. The 2011 European Commission's Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) and subsequent studies confirm this.

Although the Council is responsible for consultations concerning water fluoridation, it does not however have the responsibility for setting the level of fluoride in the water.

Decisions made to alter the fluoride levels in water in states in the US and in Ireland have not been based on health, cost or environmental issues.

Supplementary Question

Your reply still does not answer the question but I'm going to infer that the answer to that question is "no, there will be no review". In which case, is the Portfolio Holder aware that most Council's major insurance company, Zurich, refuses to insure such fluoridation activities and can he confirm that this Council is insured against claims arising from fluoridation?

Reply

There are no immediate plans to have a review on reducing or increasing the level of fluoride in water, but my personal view would be that I would quite like to at least investigate the possibility of fluoridating the remainder of Staffordshire because in the five district which do have fluoridated water there is clear evidence there these areas have better dental health.

With regard to your question about whether we are insured, I will check with the Director of Public Health but I am pretty certain the answer will be yes and I will give you a full answer in writing later.

Mr I. Hollinshead asked the following question of the Leader of the Council whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

In view of the Government's recent announcement about free school meals, will he now publicly acknowledge that the Labour Group should be given the credit they deserve for having it as one of their pledges in their manifesto?

Reply

The Government's recent announcement is that from September 2014 every infant school pupil in reception class, year 1 and year 2 (age 4 to 7) in state funded schools will receive a hot, nutritious meal at lunch time. This follows on from an extensive review of school food, 'The School Food Plan', produced independently for the Department for Education that was published in July 2013. In addition the Government will also extend free school meals to disadvantaged students in further education and sixth form colleges. Free school meals are currently available only for eligible students at school sixth forms.

The Labour Party has suggested both free school meals for all pupils or free school meals for all primary pupils. The Labour Party County Council election pledge was to introduce a pilot scheme to fund free school meals for all children which, at the

time, would have cost the County Council an additional £26.5M a year if taken across the county.

Supplementary Question

As you are not prepared to acknowledge the pledge, will the Leader consider implementing more of the pledges made in our manifesto? If this is not something you will undertake I'm sure that this is something we will be asking the Government to do instead as they seem quite happy to implement opposition pledges.

Reply

The point, and it seems to have been missed, is that the Labour County Council Election pledge was unfunded. My reverse question is which service would the Labour County Council Group stop to fund it?

Mr M. Deaville asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Can the Cabinet Member assure me that, if the Council were to stop providing services from the Day Centre in Cheadle, there will be sufficient alternatives in place for the older people who currently use this service?

Reply

I am happy to be able to fully reassure the Member for Cheadle. Two very reputable organisations, Moorlands Home Link and Approach already offer high quality day support in Cheadle, indeed Moorlands Home link is a short walk from Cheadle Day Centre. Both organisations are keen to expand and offer support to more people.

Just as important is that the Council continues to honour its long standing commitment that no service will cease until all people currently using a service have been found suitable alternatives. You can also be reassured that when the Council has managed similar changes elsewhere, for example in Uttoxeter and Stafford, the vast majority of people affected have reported that they prefer their new service.

Supplementary Question

Here we are looking at vulnerable people, the people who use the Day Centre obviously. Equally important I would say are the carers who look after these people 24/7. So I am reassured by your answer but may I also be assured that carers, particularly older carers, will be supported well.

Reply

I could not agree more. Supporting carers is an absolute priority to this Council and I would like to formally say that the contribution they make to society is huge and, frankly, without them we would be in a whole lot of trouble. Therefore, I want to

stress that carers are at the very heart of this process as well as the users, and any changes must work for them as well as for the users.

Mr I. Hollinshead asked the following question of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Transformation whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

It is reported that Entrust have put an application in for a new building on Riverway. The cost of the application is £20,000 and it is alleged that this administration have paid the application fee. Can you substantiate this?

Reply

The County Council is a 49% shareholder in Entrust and the County Council work closely with them to assist them to deliver their outcomes as this is good for our children's futures and growth and prosperity in Staffordshire.

With regard to the planning application for the Entrust HQ on Riverway the County Council supported them in putting together the application, submitted it on their behalf and paid the fee of £19,739 following the receipt of this fee from Panacea (the company that are financing the build for the new Entrust HQ), which was received on the 5th September 2013. The planning application was submitted on the 9th September. Therefore, it is simply not the case that the County Council has financed the application.

Supplementary Question

Would you not acknowledge though that it may have been a bit more useful to give a bit more information so that we do not have such rumours flying around?

Reply

Whatever information you want we can provide you with it but we don't want to provide so much information that Members are overwhelmed. This, as you say, is a rumour. You only need to ask and we will clarify it.

Mr M. Deaville asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

Can the Cabinet Member provide more detail about the meaning of option 3 in the current consultation on the future of day opportunities for people with learning disabilities? Some of my constituents tell me they are unclear of exactly what it means for them.

Reply

Option 3 is based on successful work that has already begun in some districts in Staffordshire. In option 3 large poorly suited buildings that are too big, too expensive and under-used would be replaced by smaller buildings specifically designed to support people whose needs are more complex. These smaller buildings would have specialist equipment and facilities so that they can properly support people who have severe physical disabilities or complex health conditions as well as a learning disability. These smaller buildings would have special quiet areas so they are better able to support people who have behaviours that are challenging, such as people who are on the Autistic Spectrum. For example only a short drive from here is Marsh Court. This is a newly refurbished smaller building that specifically caters for people with complex needs who continue to need a building based service. Marsh Court replaced the old style Stafford Day Service. People who use this service and their carers tell us the new service is better, and that it why option 3 is our preferred option as the people who matter have told us it works for them. I am more than happy to arrange a visit to Marsh Court for any members who wish to see it in action first hand.

In October we are holding 'Your Future: Your Choice' market place events in each of the districts which will allow carers to meet other local service providers and to get a chance to see and discuss with our staff what option 3 could look like for them. I would encourage all members to attend their local market place events to which you have already been invited.

Ms S. Woodward asked the following question of the Chairman of the County Council whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

I welcome the essential toolkit for Staffordshire County Councillors, "The Knowledge", now being circulated to members, though like many colleagues would have appreciated this 5 months ago. However, I read with interest under section 5.2 on Page 18 that Meetings of Council will receive "*reports (if any) on Scrutiny activity*" and under section 10 on Page 21 that Committees "*will bring any matters of particular significance before the Council*". As "The Knowledge" also says "*The Chairman will determine the order of business at the Council*", does the Chairman believe that no matters of significance have been considered by any Committees since May and what discussions has he held prior to this meeting with Chairs of Committees in order to determine his view?

Reply

I am surprised that the Member has asked me this question rather than directing it towards the Chairman of the Corporate Review Committee which oversees the work of the various scrutiny committees. If Scrutiny Chairs would like to put a report on the agenda detailing the work that they have done then they are free to do so, and provision is made in the Procedural Standing Orders for such reports to be included on the agenda as of right. My understanding is that Scrutiny Chairs have used, and will continue to use, this facility as and when they and their committees consider it appropriate. In between such reports they regularly keep all Members informed of their work via the Members' weekly bulletin. If the Member doesn't like this

approach then she needs to take it up with the Scrutiny Chairs or raise it at the Corporate Review Committee of which she is a Member.

Supplementary Question

Will you ensure that Scrutiny Chairs are invited to take up that opportunity and to fulfil their responsibilities to all Members so that we are all engaged in the business of the Council and are made aware of issues of significance in what is regularly termed as “a Member led Council”?

Reply

I will discuss this issue with the Chairman of the Corporate Review Committee and will respond to you in writing.

Mr C. Wileman asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

In light of the fact that, at the last moment, Tiny Toez decided not to run nursery care from the children's centre in Leek, can you guarantee that they will not withdraw from any of the others - especially the centre in Burton on Trent?

Reply

Tiny Toez have signed a 7 year lease to provide childcare provision from all of the other Children's Centres – six in total, including East Staffordshire Children's Centre. They are already working hard to build the business and increase child numbers at all the centres – and there is no evidence at all to suggest that they will close any of the businesses. That is as close to a guarantee as I can give you.

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

Question

When the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group were in opposition, before the 2009 County Council elections, they said that they believed the Majority Opposition Group should Chair the Scrutiny Committees. Why do they not believe that now?

Reply

The appointment of Select Committee Chairmen and Vice Chairmen is a matter for the County Council.

At the time that I am alleged to have commented that the opposition should chair Scrutiny Committees, the then controlling Labour Group appointed Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen from their own Group members, save for the Vice

Chairman of Corporate Scrutiny. As a result I announced, unremunerated, the appointment of a Shadow Cabinet of six members from my own Group which I subsequently argued should be remunerated for their additional work at the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council agreed with the Panel that five of the six should be remunerated with a special responsibility allowance. Since the Labour Group have announced a Shadow Cabinet of six members which the County Council have agreed be remunerated with a special responsibility allowance and that these members liaise with Cabinet members and where appropriate attend triangulation meetings for Scrutiny I consider that adequate provision for opposition to perform their proper role in scrutiny has been satisfied.

Supplementary Question

I am interested in the Leader's reference to triangulation meetings. I am not aware of having been invited to any such triangulation meetings neither, I believe, are any of my fellow Shadow Cabinet colleagues. I wonder if this is a new policy or whether it is simply that there has never been anything that the Conservative Group consider it is appropriate to invite us to? I would also like to ask that, before 2009 the then controlling Labour Group ensured that the majority opposition group, which was then the Conservatives, had Vice-Chairman positions on Scrutiny Committees, which political party does the Leader of the Council think therefore is more appropriate and inclusive on the issue of Scrutiny, his own or the Labour Party?

Reply

You should have been invited to the triangulation meetings and that is obviously an oversight. You should be in attendance so that you can then start laying out the work plans for Scrutiny and Select Committees so that we get the best benefit of all Members of the County Council.

Prior to 2009 I think that the Member is referring to that magnificent title we had when scrutiny was first brought in. The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen were Labour and we had Junior Vice-Chairmen of Scrutiny. We did not have a Shadow Cabinet.

Mr M. Greatorex asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing whose reply is set out below the question:-

Question

I was looking at the public health profiles of Tamworth recently, and there are obviously some major issues. What are the County Council doing about them either through the Health and Wellbeing Board or via Public Health?

Reply

Public Health England's Health Profile for Tamworth was published on 24th September 2013. 32 indicators are presented: eight were better, 15 were similar and nine benchmarked worse than the England average. These nine indicators are:

1. Statutory homelessness

2. GCSE achievement
3. Violent Crime
4. Breastfeeding initiation
5. Teenage pregnancy
6. Healthy eating adults
7. Obese adults
8. People diagnosed with diabetes
9. Hip fractures in over 65s.

The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) has published a five year plan “Living Well in Staffordshire” identifying twelve areas for action: parenting, school readiness, education, NEET (not in education, employment or training), children in care, alcohol, drugs, lifestyle and mental wellbeing, dementia, falls prevention, frail elderly and end of life. This will address many of the indicators where Tamworth benchmarks poorly. The HWB is working closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner to identify ways to address the root causes of crime and poor health.

Staffordshire County Council (SCC) has new Public Health responsibility to commission access to activities that will enhance mobility and exercise. The Public Health team has been working with Age UK to promote the uptake and utilisation of these services.

Tamworth Strategic Partnership has a Health and Wellbeing Board (THWBB). This partnership group includes representatives from the SCC, CCG, Tamworth Borough Council, Engaging Communities and the Voluntary sector. THWBB response to the health and wellbeing needs of Tamworth is the Healthy Tamworth initiative which is being launched at an event on 25th October.

The Healthy Tamworth initiative is intended to galvanise a partnership response to the needs and to generate a partnership movement for change. The plan to support this initiative currently includes actions around physical activity/ active travel, planning opportunities including influencing fast food provision, healthier housing, focus on school including interventions around sexual health, ageing well and engaging communities.

The plan is being reviewed in the context of the Health Profile. A more detailed profile (covering a larger data set) produced by PHS is under development and will also be considered.

Supplementary Question

Can the Cabinet Member tell us specifically about any current proposals in respect of number nine on the list, hip fractures in over 65s?

Reply

Public Health Staffordshire has looked into the possible reasons for the high number of hip fractures in Tamworth. According to the 2011/12 figures, Tamworth's figures are the worst in the Country. The improvements that have been put in place since then show a clear reduction in number of hip fractures in 2012/13. There are a

number of reasons for this including, amongst other things, the services provided by the Tamworth Community Falls Service. This service has been commissioned by partners including Public Health and CCG with the aim of reducing the rate of fall in older people.

Falls prevention is an issue for the whole of Staffordshire, not just for Tamworth.

11. Petitions

(a) Green Lane, Whitgreave

Mr Chapman presented a petition from local residents in Whitgreave concerning the poor state of the road surfaces in the parish and, in particular, along Green Lane.

(b) Little Aston Lane, Little Aston

Mr Smith presented a petition from residents objecting to speeding traffic and lorries using Little Aston Lane, Little Aston.

Chairman