

LEEK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Additional Meeting held on 29th August 2023

Chairman: Cllr. L Swindlehurst

Present: Cllrs: M. Swindlehurst, K. Hoptroff, D. Hilyer, K. Nicholls, D. Young, B. Birch, S. Webster & W. Cawley.
District Cllr. Mark Johnson and County Councillor Charlotte Atkins

20 members of the public were in attendance,

Minutes - D. Wheat, Town Clerk

34. Welcome: The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the agenda ahead.

35. Apologies: Cllr. P. Powner & Cllr. S. Wales

36. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests and consideration for the granting of Dispensations:

None were disclosed.

37. To Receive Items for Information: Guest Speakers: Phil Jones and Mike Barr from the 20's Plenty for Staffordshire Group. Mr Jones and Mr Barr gave a presentation to illustrate his talk on 20's Plenty for Staffordshire.

38. Questions: The Chairman asked the Councillors for any questions before opening the floor to members of the public.

Mr. Jones stated that on 17th September, The Welsh Government have made a traffic regulation order to permanently reduce the speed limit in all areas with lampposts to 20MPH and this will now be enforceable through Law. The Cabinet Member for Highways in Staffordshire Cllr. David Williams, so far has not supported the campaign for 20MPH initiatives even though many Parishes have complained to the County Council about speeding issues on local roads. London is almost all now 20MPH.

Mr. Barr offered 20MPH stickers for car windows and wheelie bins to raise awareness of the campaign in your area.

1. Reasons for 20MPH were discussed:

In Leek 7000 signatures were collected by a member of the Civic Society on a petition, with the reasoning that 20MPH in Leek would mean:

- Fewer casualties and fatalities.
- 20MPH would enable more independent mobility for vulnerable residents and young people who are currently not allowed to crossroads alone because of fear from their carers.
- Less noise
- Cleaner air

2. Costs were discussed:

Estimates for signage was stated to be approximately £300 each for a 600mm square sign.

For signage for a whole town it would be in the region of £10,000.00.

To make a 20mph traffic Regulation Order to make a speed limit legal costs £4000.00.

3. Trials in other towns were discussed:

60% of traffic is local. Some towns have trialed a pace car program where a car goes at 20MPH and has a sign in the back window consequently slowing down all traffic following.

Faversham which has approx. 20,000 residents similar to Leek have adopted 20MPH and so have Bristol.

In the Scottish Borders, 97 villages have adopted it.

4. **Evidence of Results were discussed:**

A reduction in speed definitely has an effect on a reduction of collisions. Cheshire West and Chester City Council have areas of 20MPH. There has been an audit on the effectiveness here and the results show a 43% reduction in collisions, a 14% reduction in serious incidents/fatalities and that the reduction to Hospital care and Police time is estimated at 2-3 million pounds.

Oxfordshire have invested 8 million into a 20MPH initiative.

Staffordshire have 9 resolutions from Parishes supporting 20MPH.

There was a debate on the costs of outlay compared with the benefits to pressures on the NHS.

The Councillors and members of the public were encouraged to look at the 20's Plenty website for a list of benefits.

- Health
- Child protection
- Independence of Vulnerable adults
- Social justice
- Public transport

There was a discussion about fatalities in Leek not often being traffic related.

The cost of slowing down public transport was discussed. Questions were raised about slower buses causing more fuel consumption.

Questions were raised about how to convince the public that this would be a good initiative to do. It was mentioned that the slower speed would give a reduction of exhaust emissions of approximately 30%

It was discussed if there is any data on how it would affect cyclists.

The Council asked what the public would like the Town Council to do? It was suggested that a simple resolution to support 20's Plenty for Staffordshire would be the first step. It was then discussed that a public consultation would be required if any outlay was to be added to the Precept.

Ultimately it is the County Council that would apply for any Traffic Regulation Orders.

County Councillor Charlotte Atkins concluded by stating the consensus at Stafford has stopped this moving forward in Staffordshire. She mentioned that a speed limit of 20MPH was already in the pipeline for St Edwards Street, Leek, but that Staffordshire County Council have not followed Government Guidelines.

A member of the Leek Civic Society listed all the road traffic issues in Leek which have occurred over the last 20 years and asked Leek Town Council to ask Staffordshire County Council if Leek could be a pilot scheme. Our neighbouring town of Buxton are currently in the process of a trial period in Buxton Town Centre.

Thanks, were then given by the Chair to Mr. Barr and Mr. Jones for traveling so far to attend the meeting and giving the presentation. Thanks were given in return from the Leek and District Civic Society to the Town Council for organising the meeting. The Clerk was thanked for solving the IT issues.

20's Plenty for Staffordshire to be on the Agenda at the 19th September meeting of the Town Council.

Meeting ended 20.25