

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Enlargement of Manor Hill First School, Stone

The Cabinet have approved the publication of a statutory proposal to increase the capacity at Manor Hill First, Stone to enable the school to accommodate 125 additional children generated from new housing in the catchment area. If this statutory proposal is approved, it will increase the capacity of the school from 100 to 225 places.

(Cabinet – 19 December 2018)

2. Staffordshire Moorlands Growth Strategy

The Cabinet have approved the implementation of the Staffordshire Moorlands Growth Strategy, developed jointly by Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, which outlines the shared ambitions for the district in relation to economic, housing and health developments and also supports the delivery of the County Council's Connected Staffordshire Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

(Cabinet – 19 December 2018)

3. Newcastle-under-Lyme Growth Strategy

The Cabinet have approved the implementation of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Growth Strategy, developed jointly by Staffordshire County Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, which outlines the shared ambitions for the Borough in relation to economic, housing and health developments and also supports the County Council's Connected Staffordshire Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

(Cabinet – 19 December 2018)

4. Adult Learning Disability Community Offer 2022

The purpose of Staffordshire's Adult Learning Disability Community Offer 2022 Programme is to establish the assessed eligible care and support needs and outcomes of adults with a learning disability and ensure that there are appropriate and sustainable services across the county to meet them. The Programme will also support people to maximise their independence, in line with Staffordshire's Whole Life Disability Strategy and the Council's vision for Health and Care. The Cabinet have noted the proposed options for Day Opportunities for Adults with a Learning Disability and/or Autism and have agreed that proportionate further engagement with key stakeholders be commenced.

(Cabinet – 16 January 2019)

5. Enlargement of The Rawlett School – An AET Academy (Tamworth)

In response to new housing being built in the catchment area of the Academy, the Cabinet have approved proposals to increase capacity at The Rawlett School, which

is rated 'good' by OFSTED. The Governors and Academy Trust are in full support of the proposal and believe that the valuable education experience gained by current pupils can be offered to more local children with the increased infrastructure proposed. The scheme agreed with The Rawlett School will increase capacity from 960 places to 1260 places (60 places per year group, Year 7 to Year 11) by providing four additional general classrooms, two ICT-rich rooms, expanded dining facilities, internal remodelling to create an additional science room and to refurbish other existing spaces. Section 106 Education Contributions have been secured and received from the permitted developments in the catchment area to mitigate the impact of development, to be utilised at The Rawlett School.

(Cabinet – 16 January 2019)

6. Executive Responses to All Party Member Groups

The Cabinet have considered and noted the initial Executive Responses from the portfolio holders with regards to the recommendations from the following four All Party Member Group investigations:

- The External Relationships All Party Member Group undertook an overview approach to Brexit. Accepting that Brexit is going ahead the APMG did not seek to rehearse historic arguments. The approach was around how Staffordshire raises its voice and profile in preparing for Brexit and is seen to spark the Brexit debate.
- The Community All Party Member Group undertook an overview review into 'How do we increase the capacity and utilise the services of the Council's VCSE Strategic Capacity Building Partner to deliver 'People Helping People' and reduce the involvement of SCC?'
- The Improvement All Party Member Group undertook a review into 'How do we increase the use of the digital channel and take advantage of advances in technology to enable more of Staffordshire's residents to run local services, support each other and to be enabled and empowered to take decisions that affect their local area?'
- The Innovation All Party Member Group undertook a review into 'How do we promote children's emotional and mental wellbeing to reduce referrals to specialist services at Staffordshire County Council and other partners by intervening earlier to ensure better long-term outcomes?'

(Cabinet – 16 January 2019)

7. Fatal House Fire

I know I speak for all of us in the chamber when I say how shocked we were to hear of the devastating house fire in Stafford, which resulted in the loss of four young lives.

Our thoughts remain very much with the family, friends and neighbours of Riley, Keegan, Tilly and Olly at this incredibly sad time.

As a county council, we will continue to offer wider support to teachers and fellow school pupils affected by this tragedy.

8. MTFS

Turning now to the main business of the reports. Despite the unprecedented financial pressures, we have heard how we have managed to close a £35m shortfall and deliver a balanced budget for 2019/20.

While this is no small achievement, these are still uncertain times, especially around how councils like ours can continue to fund the care of rising numbers of vulnerable adults and children.

With the help of our MPs and partners we will continue to press the Government on the need for a long-term solution on this.

9. Communities

With less money to go around, communities and, indeed you as local members, have key roles to play in supporting communities deliver local, affordable, alternative solutions.

The £2,500 community member fund will allow you to identify projects which, through matched funding will help children and families or support health and wellbeing projects.

We are also allocating each member an additional £20,000 to support highways improvements in your local area. This one-off funding can be used for fixing potholes, cleaning gullies or other highways maintenance which you feel are important.

My Cabinet colleague Helen Fisher has said that you are very much “the eyes and ears” of your local community and I know you will make this funding work as hard as possible to bring the biggest benefits to the areas you serve.

10. Growing Our Economy

In these financial difficult times it is more important than ever that we focus on continuing to grow a strong economy for Staffordshire.

This means investing in key strategic roads, proactively meeting future demands for school places and playing a stronger role in housing development.

Our £116m capital programme for next year includes the Stafford Western Access Route, the Lichfield Southern Bypass and a new Primary school at Pye Green.

Planning permission has also been secured for the i54 South Staffordshire extension and for the Chatterley Valley Scheme. Highways work is now also underway on the £160m McArthurGlen Designer Outlet near Cannock. Together these three schemes alone promise to create around 4,500 new jobs.

11. Transport Innovation

Finally, there was some good news last week when it was announced that a county council-led partnership had won a bid to be part of a Government funded innovation project.

The £1.9m 'live lab' project at Keele University will develop, test and demonstrate how a smart highways network can be designed, maintained and extended to local roads.

The project, which includes the university, county council highways partner Amey and Urban Integrated Ltd, will bring in innovative SMEs to deliver the scheme.