Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Quarter 4 2016/17 Performance Report

The Cabinet have received an overview of the county council’s performance in delivering the Council’s three priority outcomes focused upon ensuring:

- The people of Staffordshire will be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth.
- The people of Staffordshire will be healthier and more independent.
- The people of Staffordshire will feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

They noted the following:

- In August 2016 (latest available figures), 6.9% of the working age population claimed out-of-work benefits in Staffordshire, which was lower than the national average (8.3%).
- Wage levels for full time workers also increased in 2016 to an average of £27,641 in Staffordshire, which is above the West Midlands average (£26,278) but still just below the national average (£28,503).
- In January 2017, 87.3% of all schools in Staffordshire were rated as ‘Good or Outstanding’ by Ofsted, compared to 89.5% nationally. The target is for 92% of Staffordshire’s schools to be ‘Good or Outstanding’ by August 2017.
- 2016 results for Staffordshire show that 73.8% of pupils achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This is a statistically significant increase compared to 2015 results (70.0%) with an increase of 3.8 percentage points. Staffordshire continues to record a result that is above the national average (69.3%).
- In January 2017, there were 986 looked after children in Staffordshire. Of these, 8.7% (86) were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), compared to 6.2% (63) in January 2016. There has been a 5% reduction in the number of ‘ordinarily resident’ looked after children, from 951 in January 2016 to 900 in January 2017. At the end of Quarter 1, 2016/17 (the date of the latest benchmarking data), Staffordshire had a rate of 59.2 per 10,000 looked after children which was lower than the West Midlands rate of 74.2.

(Cabinet – 19 April 2016)

2. Fourth Quarter Budget Monitoring Report

The Cabinet have received an overview of the county council’s performance (including the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) and the progress being made in delivering the Council’s three priority outcomes at the end of the fourth quarter 2016/17. They noted that the latest revenue forecast outturn shows an anticipated overspend of £8.9m (1.9%), a slight reduction from the third quarter forecast of £9.4m overspend (2.0%). The main pressures related to the Better Care Fund, (£15m), the SSOTP risk share (£5.7m) and additional forecast costs around independent sector placements for Looked After Children (£3.8m).
The latest capital outturn projection is £120.9m, compared to the quarter 3 position of £132.9m, a decrease of 9.0%. This projection is a fully funded position. There has been some reprofiling of schemes, including the A50 project, Newcastle Hub, Hob Hill Primary School, and Branston Road new Secondary. This accounts for the majority of the decrease in the capital programme.

_(Cabinet – 19 April 2016)_

### 3. New Members

In our first meeting of Full Council since the local elections, I would like to welcome all Members both old and new.

In fact, with a number of colleagues choosing to stand down this time around, there are in fact almost as many new faces as old – with 31 councillors joining or re-joining the county council here today.

Since 2009, the way in which local authorities and the wider public sector are both run and funded has changed immensely. Here in Staffordshire we have been swift to adapt, but of course there is still much more work that needs to be done.

More challenging times undoubtedly lie ahead, but together I am confident we have what it takes to meet these challenges and create a stronger Staffordshire, continuing to grow the economy, creating more skilled jobs and supporting people to help themselves lead healthier and more independent lives for as long as possible.

### 4. Pothole Investment

For those new to the council, despite most of our funding being spent on vulnerable children and adults, you will soon discover what the number one item people raise with their local councillor is...potholes.

We have listened to what local people have been saying, and this month we have announced a further £5m of council funding to invest in our roads over the next 12 months.

Good roads are important to the council, to residents and to businesses and we have reached a point that without this fresh investment the condition of our roads would deteriorate, costing more in the long-run to repair.

This investment won’t make Staffordshire a pothole free county, but it will help us get on the front foot by helping to clear the backlog and carrying out wider hotspot patching in areas where there are a number of defects.

We have increased crews and invested in technology in the form of large scale velocity patchers and I hope I can count on your support to share this news with residents when crews are in your area.
5. Social Care

While it is great to see that at just 21-years-old, we have one of the youngest newly elected county councillors in the country, if not the youngest, one of the biggest issues for the county council is supporting a growing ageing population.

Although we will be investing £300m in care across all ages this year, funding of adult social care continues to be an increasing pressure.

An extra £15m will now be spent on social care this year and we are currently looking at how this can directly improve care for residents, help bring stability to the fragile care market and ease the pressure on the NHS and I will share the full details of our proposals with Members in the coming months.

6. Staffordshire Day

We all know what a great county Staffordshire is, so it was fantastic to see so many people celebrate the county on Staffordshire Day.

The second Staffordshire Day saw events taking place in communities across the county and in Stoke-on-Trent and this year coincided with the May Bank Holiday.

So make a date in your diary for May 1, 2018 to support the celebrations once again.

7. Sporting Staffordshire

On a sporting note, the football season may have come to a close, but I would like to add my congratulations to Burton Albion who finished in their highest ever position in the football league, and will be playing once again in the Championship next season.

If you can’t wait until then for some great sport in Staffordshire, then I am pleased to say that the county will be welcoming the Women’s (cycle) Tour on June 8 before going on to host Ironkids and Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire on June 17 and June 18.

These events not only help promote health and fitness, but are also a great opportunity to boost the local economy and showcase what a fantastic county we all live in.

So if one of these events is passing through your division please do show your support and cheer on the competitors and Staffordshire.