

## **Statement of the Leader of the Council**

### **1. Integrated Performance Report Outturn 2018/19 and Quarter 1, 2019/20**

The Cabinet have considered an overview of Council's progress, performance and financial position in delivering against its Strategic Plan and Delivery Plan. They have noted that, following the implementation of spending controls and significant efforts by services across the county council to identify and deliver additional savings in year, the final financial revenue position was an underspend of £2.222m across portfolio budgets with the remaining unspent contingency taking the overall underspend to £3.562m (0.7%). This was within the county council's Financial Health target of 2% variation on revenue budgets. This amount will now be put into general balances to be available to support the challenging Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in 2019/20 and beyond.

The capital programme showed total expenditure of £128.084m. This reflects the council's continued investment in school places, highways and economic regeneration. The budget assumed the continued use of capital receipts to fund transformational spend. In 2018/19, £13.242m of capital receipts were used to fund transformational spend, which is included in the total expenditure.

*(Cabinet – 17 July 2019)*

### **2. Burton-upon-Trent Regeneration Strategy**

The Burton-upon-Trent Regeneration Strategy sets out options for the improvement and future proofing of the town of Burton upon Trent; both as a centre for people to visit and shop, and a place for people to live and work to create a "Better, Brighter Burton in the future". The Cabinet have given their support to the further exploration and implementation of the recommendations contained within the strategy through the Burton Town Regeneration Board.

*(Cabinet – 17 July 2019)*

### **3. Staffordshire Response to the Local Area Review – Written Statement of Action**

In November 2018 Staffordshire was inspected to provide an independent external evaluation of how well the local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to the SEND Code of Practice. Whilst identifying some strengths, the Inspectors determined that a Written Statement of Action was required for Staffordshire to address the significant areas of weakness.

A draft of the Written Statement of Action was presented to the select committee working group comprising representatives from the Safe and Strong Communities, Healthy Staffordshire and Prosperous Staffordshire Select committees on 29 March 2019 and their comments were incorporated into the final statement of action submitted to Ofsted.

The Written Statement of Action which sets out how Staffordshire County Council and NHS Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups will work together with partners, parents/carers and young people and with school leaders, to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The Cabinet have noted the contents of the Local Area Written Statement of Action.

*(Cabinet – 17 July 2019)*

#### **4. HS2 Phase 2a Qualifying Authority Process**

The HS2 Hybrid Bill (Phase 2a) will grant planning permission for the construction of a high-speed railway from Handsacre in Lichfield to Crewe. However, this “planning permission” will be subject to conditions requiring the nominated undertaker (the party/parties who will construct the railway) to obtain the consent or approval of the Local Authorities along the route for certain matters. The Bill gives each Local Authority a choice between having a wide or narrow range of controls over the approval of construction details. Local Planning Authorities opting for a wider range of controls are referred to as “Qualifying Authorities”. The Cabinet have agreed that the County Council becomes a Qualifying Authority for the construction of Phase 2a of the HS2 Hybrid Bill which will give the Council responsibility for approving details that are “county matters” in planning terms as follows:

- a. Plans and specifications and construction arrangements about waste and soil disposal and excavation of bulk materials from borrow pits.
- b. Construction arrangements comprising lorry routing.

Becoming a Qualifying Authority involves a commitment by the Council to deal with applications appropriately and within specified timescales, in return for control over a wider range of matters than it would otherwise have.

*(Cabinet – 17 July 2019)*

#### **5. Adoption of Revised Statement of Community Involvement**

The county council is committed to giving everyone the best opportunity to comment on planning decisions that might affect them. The Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will consult with the public and other interested parties when developing the Minerals and Waste Local Plans and determining planning applications. Local planning authorities are required to review their local plans and SCIs every 5 years.

A revised draft revised SCI was presented to the Planning Committee on 4 June and was subsequently made available for public consultation through the county council’s website for 6 weeks, from 12 June to 24 July, as required by the Regulations. Of the responses, nearly all were supportive of the document and there were only a handful of suggested changes.

The Cabinet, at its meeting on 21 August 2019, adopted the revised Statement of Community Involvement.

*(Cabinet – 21 August 2019)*

## **6. Treasury Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2019**

The Cabinet have considered the Council's investment and borrowing activity during 2018/19 including both borrowing and investment decisions taken throughout the year in the light of the interest rates and economic conditions prevailing at the time. They noted that the UK economy faced an increasingly uncertain environment, as the risk of a no deal Brexit grew against a backdrop of slowing global economic growth. Consequently, the County Council retained its Treasury Management Policy of using internal cash balances instead of borrowing money. This has delivered significant savings for taxpayers, as the infrastructure to deliver more skilled, better-paid jobs is being funded at a lower cost. They also noted that the current Annual Investment Strategy is considered prudent and sufficiently robust to meet any market challenges created by the UK's decision to leave the European Union and that Officers will continue to monitor the position.

*(Cabinet – 21 August 2019)*

## **7. Adult Learning Disability 2022 Community Offer: The Future of Learning Disability Services directly provided by Staffordshire County Council**

The purpose of Staffordshire's Adult Learning Disability 2022 Community Offer Programme is to establish the assessed eligible care and support needs of adults with a learning disability and/or autism and ensure that there are appropriate and sustainable services across the county to meet them.

In June 2019, Cabinet requested that proposals for the future of services directly provided by the Council for adults with a learning disability and/or autism be developed and evaluated.

These proposals were developed following engagement with a range of key stakeholders (including users, staff and carers), and bore in mind current and anticipated future demand, the current state of the market, and the quality of current services.

The Cabinet, at their meeting on 18 September 2019, considered the proposals and approved the commissioning of a Supported Living service (care and accommodation), from the independent market, to replace the residential service currently provided by the Council at Greenfields House in Staffordshire Moorlands. They also approved the commissioning of a Supported Living service (care only), from the independent market, to replace the care currently directly provided by the Council at Horninglow Bungalows in East Staffordshire.

Consultations will now be held with staff (and recognised Trade Unions) on the proposed changes for Greenfields House and Horninglow Bungalow

The Cabinet also approved an extension to the contracts for two block-booked residential replacement care services at Woodland View and Silverbirch with the current provider until July 2020.

Proposals for the remaining directly provided learning disability services and the long-term future of block-booked residential replacement care services are to be presented to Cabinet in October 2019.

*(Cabinet – 18 September 2019)*

## **8. Shared Lives Contract Recommission**

Shared Lives is a service where people with assessed eligible social care needs share the home of a specially recruited and trained carer and their family. Shared Lives supports them to reach their potential and live healthy, safe, independent and fulfilling lives in their own communities. Shared Lives offers long term placements as well as short breaks and day opportunities.

The Council's current contract for the Shared Lives service is due to expire on 31 March 2020 and Cabinet have given their approval to the recommissioning of the service. If a suitable provider cannot be found through the tender process, the current Shared Lives service agreement will be extended for a period of up to 6 months to enable the Council to consider its options for service provision.

*(Cabinet – 18 September 2019)*

## **9. Arrangements for the Provision of Reablement Services for Adults in Staffordshire**

Reablement services offer a short period of support for people to help them regain the skills and confidence they need to live independently, typically after a period of ill health – for example following a hospital admission.

The current Section 75 Agreement between the Council and Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust ('MPFT') for reablement services expires in March 2020.

The Cabinet, at their meeting on 18 September 2019 agreed that the County Council enters into a new Section 75 agreement with MPFT for reablement services for the period from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2023.

*(Cabinet – 18 September 2019)*

## **10. Business Case for Council Owned New Build Care Homes with Nursing**

The Council is facing a rising cost of new care home placements, which is driving up the average cost of placements. To mitigate this cost pressure the Council is increasing the number of nursing home placement for Council funded placements through the refurbishment of Council owned building, Hillfield. In addition, the Cabinet, at their meeting on 18 September 2019, approved proposals for the development of two new Council owned nursing care homes, one in Stafford and one in South Staffordshire, providing 120-200 additional care home placements.

*(Cabinet – 18 September 2019)*

## **11. South Staffordshire Growth Agreement**

The Cabinet have given their support to a growth agreement which has been developed between the County Council and South Staffordshire District Council building on the success of the previous two district deals, and which outlines a joint vision for the district which also supports the delivery of County Council's Connected Staffordshire Strategic Plan 2018-2022.

This agreement sets out a combined strategy to continue to grow and develop South Staffordshire's economy and its communities in a way that benefits everyone. By working together to plan for the future and combining resources, the two councils will be laying foundations for long term prosperity and a good quality of life for people in South Staffordshire.

To ensure that the vision within the agreement is delivered a detailed action plan has been developed and will be monitored through a joint governance board. The action plan builds on a set of joint working principles that both Local Authorities have agreed that will translate through into how in partnership we will deliver growth in South Staffordshire. For each of the priorities on the action plan should there be a financial or resource implication then a separate report will be brought forward through appropriate governance.

*(Cabinet – 18 September 2019)*

## **12. Government spending review**

The Chancellor Sajid Javid announced in this year's Spending Round additional funding for social care and for children with special educational needs. Last week the Chancellor also gave some more details too of further national investment in buses and roads, with an additional £220m for bus services across England and £25bn for strategic roads between 2020 and 2025.

While any additional investment is obviously always welcome, what we still need is a long-term national solution to the funding of care in particular. Of course, we will need to wait until early December for the draft Local Government Finance Settlement to see how much Staffordshire will benefit.

## **13. Growing Staffordshire's Economy**

Growing our economy continues to be a key priority for this council, so it was good to hear that more jobs are being created at business development sites with county council involvement and our skills programme is exceeding its target.

The total value of the county economic growth programme is now around £477m, which includes £81.9m direct investment by the county council. For every £1 investment by the county council in current live projects, £9.22 additional funding is levered in. The 16 employment creating projects which have been completed since the start of the programme could create more than 22,500 jobs when fully occupied.

## **14. Staffordshire's Countryside**

As a county council we are privileged to have a fantastic rural landscape on our doorstep. We see ourselves very much as custodians of the land we own and manage and want to do what we can to ensure it is safeguarded for the generations to come, so they can continue to enjoy and benefit from it.

Key to this is working with partners and just one recent example of this is the news that the county council and the RSPB have agreed a 100-year lease for the charity to take over the management and day-to-day running of the local authority-owned Consall Nature Park.

The RSPB will be managing Consall Woods on a 100-year lease for the benefit of visitors, woodland birds and other wildlife as well as the woodland mix of trees including oak, birch, ash, hazel, hawthorn and pine, that already provide homes for birds such as pied flycatcher, redstart, lesser spotted woodpecker and spotted flycatcher.

The agreement is one of two where groups have successfully applied to manage and maintain parts of the county council's countryside estate. The other has seen Heath Hayes and Wimblebury Parish Council take on the management and maintenance of Wimblebury Mound picnic area to the north west of Chasewater.

## **15. Potholes**

In the last three years we have invested an additional £5m to help towards tackling potholes and maintaining our roads. In the six months from April our teams have repaired around 14,000 defects, focusing on wider patching where possible.

In the county the size of Staffordshire, keeping on top of potholes is always going to be a challenge. However, despite this, the number of outstanding repairs at any time has fallen by half since 2016.

## **16. Winter Operations**

Finally staying with highways, winter is once again around the corner, with the official start of winter for the county council on Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>.

Once again, our 40-strong army of gritters will be out in force helping to keep the county safely on the move.

As a county council we have one of the most extensive winter operations in the country and without fail the crews always go above and beyond each winter.