

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Improving the Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People in Staffordshire

The existing contracts for children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing provision expire on the 31st March 2020 and a procurement process has been undertaken to identify a successful provider for the new service.

Cabinet has therefore granted approval for a delegated decision allowing for contract award in January 2020, subsequent mobilisation and service commencement from the 1st of April 2020.

(Cabinet – 18 December 2019)

2. Regional Permanency Arrangement Development (Phase One)

Cabinet have considered the progress made in respect of the formation of the Together4Children Regional Permanency Arrangement between Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council. The Partners are working together to improve outcomes for children who enter care and are unable to return to their families of origin. The Partnership aims to ensure that our children achieve emotional, physical and legal permanence; growing up in loving homes with adults who provide them with a strong sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity.

The Together4Children Regional Permanency Transformation Programme commenced in 2019 and seeks to embed functions within the Regional Permanency Arrangement through three phases between 2020 and 2024. Adoption functions were prioritised in the first phase of the Together4Children Regional Permanency Transformation in order to develop a live Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) by the 1st April 2020, as per the statutory requirement which is set out in the Education and Adoption Act 2016.

Cabinet continues to be committed to the ambition of the four local authorities in the partnership to go beyond adoption and develop a regional model of wider permanence which includes Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO).

(Cabinet – 18 December 2019)

3. Award Approval for the Provision of a Framework to Provide a Driver Training Panel to Deliver the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) in Staffordshire

As a strategic partner of the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, the County Council is commissioned to deliver a number of education and training initiatives, including driver education courses through the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS). This is at no cost to the County Council and helps to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to promote road safety (s.39 Road Traffic Act 1988). The

course fee paid for by the course attendee is collected by the County Council and is used to pay the trainers.

The Cabinet have agreed the arrangements for establishing a framework agreement with fifteen NDORS licenced driver trainers for the period of 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2023, with the option extend until the 31st March 2024, to guarantee the delivery of NDORS courses in Staffordshire.

(Cabinet – 15 January 2020)

4. Dynamic Purchasing System Contract Award for the Provision of Supported Living and Building Based Day Services

Supported Living is an alternative to residential care or living with family, enabling individuals with assessed eligible care and support needs to live in their own home with appropriate support to enable them to maintain both their health and wellbeing and their home. There are around 430 people in Supported Living placements funded by the Council, at a cost of £22m annually.

The Cabinet have considered the arrangements for the award of individual contracts under the Dynamic Purchasing System for Community Based Day Opportunities and have agreed that authority to the award individual contracts, via the Light Touch Regime Dynamic Purchasing System, be delegated to the Director for Health and Care.

The Director for Health and Care will, in turn, delegate authority for the award of individual contracts for the provision of Supported Living and Community Based Day Opportunities services, via the respective Light Touch Regime Dynamic Purchasing Systems, to the Assistant Director for Care Commissioning or Lead Commissioner(s), in line with the Council's scheme of delegation.

(Cabinet – 15 January 2020)

5. 2020 – A New Decade

This is the first Full Council of the New Year and, indeed, a new decade and despite being only February we have already had a busy few weeks.

Last month saw the first employment figures of the decade and these showed the county remains in near full employment.

Growing the economy continues to be a key priority for this council and in 2020 major business and transport development projects will be picking up pace to help pave the way for even more job creation.

Construction of the Stafford Western Access Route and Lichfield southern bypass is well under way. In addition, development at some of the county's main business parks such as i54 South Staffordshire and Kingswood Lakeside continues.

6. Official opening of Keele Business School and Smart Innovation Hub

The start of the year also saw the official opening of a new state-of-the-art building which houses Keele University's Business School together with a "Smart Innovation Hub.

We have a highly successful working partnership with Keele University which has resulted in the construction of both the Smart Innovation Hub and Innovation Centre Five.

The Science and Innovation Park is one of our prime sites for high value research and development businesses which also benefits from Enterprise Zone status, strengthening its reputation as a leading location to invest and for job creation.

7. Holocaust Memorial Day

January 2020 marked 75 years since the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camps and here in Staffordshire we were proud to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27.

Hostility and prejudice have no place in society and it is as important that we stand together in our commitment to build a better future for all.

I can also confirm that this council has joined those local authorities who have agreed to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism.

The IHRA working definition of antisemitism states: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

8. Dignity in Care Awards

We all know what a fantastic and often selfless work our carers do in supporting the more vulnerable people in our community. I am delighted therefore that on February 1 we launched our Dignity in Care Awards 2020.

So, if you know someone in your community who really does go the extra mile then please do nominate them. Further details can be found on our website at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/dignityincare

9. Coronavirus

The coronavirus hasn't been far from the news in 2020 and it appears to be a rapidly evolving situation.

While in Staffordshire, like everywhere in the UK, the risk isn't high, our public health colleagues are in regular contact with Public Health England to ensure they are up to date with the latest advice.

People here do not need to take any action at this stage.

10. Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire

Finally, preparations for the annual Ironman 70.3 Staffordshire are now underway. This year's event takes place on Sunday, June 7.

This is an event which is growing in popularity year on year and the good news is if you don't feel quite up to competing this year you can still be part of the action by signing up to be a volunteer.

Ironman is looking for individuals and groups to help out along the course on the day, so please do share this call to action with anyone you feel maybe interested. Further details can be found on Ironman's website.