

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. New Supported Living Dynamic Purchasing System

The Council funds around 436 Supported Living placements for adults with a Learning Disability, Autistic Spectrum Condition, Mental Ill Health, Physical Disability, Sensory Impairment and Acquired Brain Injury to meet their assessed eligible care and support needs.

The current Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Condition Community Support Framework is due to cease on 30 September 2019 and the Cabinet have approved the use of a dynamic purchasing system (DPS) to procure and contract for Supported Living placements for adults from 1 October 2019. Over the 4 year period of the DPS the Council expects to make around 120 new placements (plus around 50 existing placements that require bringing under contractual arrangements).

(Cabinet – 15 May 2019)

2. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards – Amendments to the Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) provide protection for the most vulnerable people living in residential homes, nursing homes or hospital environments. In May 2016 the Council decided to triage DoLS applications in order to ensure that the highest priority people could be given a full assessment. This is similar to the approach taken by most other Local Authorities. The Council has a current backlog of full DoLS assessments waiting.

In May 2019 the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) found fault in relation to this approach and the Council has therefore reviewed its approach to DoLS applications and will implement the recommendations of the LGSCO.

Legislation to replace DoLS has been agreed by the houses of parliament and is currently awaiting Royal Assent. The Cabinet have agreed that an action plan to implement this legislation be produced in compliance with the recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. In the interim, the approach to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards is to be amended so as to complete full assessments on medium and low priority cases if resources allow, and to use additional one-off funding to support new full assessments and reduce the back-log of full assessments.

(Cabinet – 15 May 2019)

3. The Staffordshire County Council Apprenticeship Strategy

The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy puts employers at the centre of identifying the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are required for the workforce of the future and to ensure that apprentices receive high quality training to meet their chosen professional standards. Public sector targets have also been introduced to

achieve a greater proportion of growth in apprenticeships. There is now a public-sector duty to ensure that 2.3% of the workforce are apprenticeships by 2020.

Apprenticeship growth is an important part of the Council's aspirations for the Staffordshire economy with the aim to raise skills levels and aspirations.

The Cabinet have approved an Apprenticeship Strategy 2019 – 2022 for Staffordshire County Council which aims to embed Apprenticeships within the county council's workforce, achieve maximum levy spend and work towards meeting the public sector target.

(Cabinet – 15 May 2019)

4. The Henry Prince CE (C) First School, Mayfield: Determination of Statutory Proposal

Over recent years, the number of pupils attending The Henry Prince CE (C) First School has declined and, despite actions by the governing body to boost numbers, the school is less than half full. With 75 places available, there are only 20 full-time pupils on roll and, with more due to move this term, the total number expected in September 2019 is only around 10 to 15 pupils. Due to this, and following consultation with stakeholders, the Cabinet have approved a statutory proposal to close The Henry Prince CE (C) First School, Mayfield on 31 August 2019. Dove CE (VC) First will become the catchment area school as it has enough places to absorb the pattern of demand for places from parents in The Henry Prince catchment area.

The Cabinet have also approved a request from the headteacher of The Henry Prince School to provide a contribution towards the cost of new uniforms for the parents of 30 full-time pupils on roll when consultation on closure started on 23 January 2018: based upon a £25 contribution per child. The county council will also provide free shared transport to all eligible children who attend Dove First, which is approximately 5½ miles by road from The Henry Prince.

(Cabinet – 15 May 2019)

5. Staffordshire History Centre Stage 1 NLHF Application

During 2018/19 Staffordshire County Council's Archives and Heritage Service and the William Salt Library Trust made a Round Two application for £3.9m to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) supported by £1.8m of fundraising, in kind contributions and matched funding from the partnership for the Staffordshire History Centre project. On 26 September 2018 HLF informed the Council that the project had been unsuccessful at Round Two.

A new national Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024 was launched by the Lottery on 30th January. There has been a rebranding and the fund has been renamed the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The application process is in three stages with an initial expression of interest assessed by the regional team who decide whether to invite a stage 1 one application to be submitted. An expression of

interest in respect of the Staffordshire History Centre was submitted at the beginning of March and has been successful.

The Cabinet have therefore agreed that a stage 1 application be submitted to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and that matched funding be earmarked for the stage 2 application for the Staffordshire History Centre.

(Cabinet – 15 May 2019)

6. Adult Learning Disability Community Offer 2022 Programme

In January 2019, the Council undertook extensive consultation with people with a learning disability and autism, asking them their opinions about the five options for building based day services as part of our Adult Learning Disability Community Offer. The Cabinet have considered the outcome of the consultation and, having taken into account the feedback and consideration that the services in their current format are not sustainable in the medium / long term, their proposal is to pursue further a combination of Options 2 (increase capacity) and 3 (redesign and/or explore alternative delivery model). The services could either be directly provided by the Council, or by a Local Authority Trading Company, along with other learning disability services. The merits of these two options are to be considered through a further evidence based options appraisal, with a recommendation to the Cabinet meeting in September 2019.

(Cabinet – 19 June 2019)

7. Contract for the Supply of Electricity and Associated Services

The Cabinet have approved proposals to procure the electricity it uses through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) framework for the period of 1st April 2020 until 31st March 2023. The Council's use of the YPO flexible framework will ensure it procures at the best kWh rates possible.

(Cabinet – 19 June 2019)

8. Development of Council Owned Older People's Nursing Homes

The Council is facing a rising cost of new care home placements, which is driving up the average cost of placements. The Council's expenditure on older people's care homes is increasing by 5% annually for residential care and 12% annually for nursing care. With this in mind, the Cabinet have approved proposals to increase nursing home capacity through the provision of Council owned nursing homes for older people to be operated either by a Local Authority Trading Company or an external care provider.

Increasing nursing home capacity will mean we can offer good quality, cost-effective placements to meet the assessed eligible social care needs of people in Staffordshire. A capital investment of around £1m and up to a maximum of £1.2m to refurbish the former Hillfield site, as well as a proposal to build two new nursing homes in the areas of highest demand, will see the county council developing

highcare environments which maximises the use of advances in technology to support the needs of residents.

(Cabinet – 19 June 2019)

9. Domestic Abuse Tri-Partite Agreement

The Cabinet have approved the signing by the County Council of two Domestic Abuse Tri-Partite Funding Agreements, one in respect of the provision of Domestic Abuse Services for Victims and one in respect of the provision of Domestic Abuse Services for Perpetrators, across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent for a period of up to five years to 30 September 2023. The County Council, the City Council and the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office have agreed to work together to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of Domestic Abuse Services for Victims and Perpetrators and the two Tri-Partite Agreements set out the terms under which the Parties have agreed to fund the cost of and collaborate in respect of this.

(Cabinet – 19 June 2019)

10. Final Outturn Report 2018/19

The Cabinet have noted the final financial outturn position of the county council, which is an underspend of £2.222m on portfolio budgets with the Contingency budget remaining unspent giving a total underspend of £3.562m.

They have also approved the carrying forward of £3.5m of the Health and Care underspend in order to fund adult social care pressures in 2019/20.

The capital programme shows total expenditure of £128.084m. This reflects the Council's continued investment in school places, highways and economic regeneration.

(Cabinet – 19 June 2019)

11. Enjoying the Summer Safely

With school pupils now enjoying the summer break, we want to make sure everyone does so safely.

The death of 21-year-old Carl Storer, who died as he heroically went to the aid of a young girl in Chasewater, is a tragic reminder of just how dangerous swimming in open waters can be.

I would make a plea to every Staffordshire parent this to summer to make sure their children know the dangers and stay away from reservoirs and quarries.

While they may look inviting, the no swimming signs are there for a good reason, as even the strongest swimmer can soon get into difficulties in the very cold water.

12. Highways Investment

The recent warm spell also means our crews have been stepping up pothole repairs across the county – with an extra £5m invested for the third year in a row.

As we all know, simply maintaining our huge network is a major challenge, but this extra investment will go some way towards managing the condition of our roads.

On top of this, each member also has £20,000 this year to invest in local projects and I know many of you have already identified improvements you would like to see made in your local communities.

Obviously, crews need to make sure that these projects are scheduled in around other priorities to make the best use of time and resources.

13. Air Quality

Promoting cleaner air is a huge priority, not only for Public Health England but also for us as a county council here in Staffordshire.

We have been actively encouraging residents to take steps to reduce air pollution and some of you may have seen the piece on Central News where children from Heath Hayes Primary took matters into their own hands to encourage motorists to stop running their car engines near schools.

Separately both Newcastle Borough Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council have received Government directives to tackle air pollution pockets, including around the A53 and we are working closely with them to support them find achievable, affordable and workable solutions which deliver goals without significantly impacting on local economies and connectivity.

14. Staffordshire Warmer Homes Fund

The Staffordshire Warmer Homes Fund is being rolled out across the county to help people who may be eligible to have central heating fitted in the homes for the first time for free.

This will not only help people stay warm in the winter months, but will also make fuel bills more affordable.

There has been a fantastic response to the initial launches in Tamworth and Lichfield and if there are people who you think may be eligible then do encourage them to apply.

Older people in particular can be a little cautious about anything that is offered for “free”, but in this case there is absolutely nothing to lose by applying.

15. People Helping People Fund

The People Helping Fund is now up and running, with all of us being able to match fund new projects which help children and families or health and wellbeing.

This is very much part of our Doing Our Bit campaign which encourages everyone to think about doing one extra thing to help themselves, their families, their neighbours or their communities.

16. Anniversary of the Moon Landing

Some of us in the chamber will remember first hand the Apollo Moon Landing in 1969 and their safe return to earth 50 years ago yesterday. An achievement that undoubtedly inspired a generation.

Closer to home the event has also inspired a space themed exhibition at Lichfield Cathedral, which is well worth a visit.

17. Dignity in Care Awards

Finally, I wanted to mention the Staffordshire Dignity in Care Awards – which recognise the huge contribution made by more than twenty inspirational carers from across the county.

These are very much people who go the extra mile every day for the people they care for. Fiona Pattyson-Johnson from Stafford was named as Dignity Champion.

Fiona, who cares for Timothy Tooley, a young man with Down's Syndrome clearly loves her work and says Tim's "smile makes the day worthwhile".

So, congratulations to Fiona and carers across the county, both paid and unpaid who we certainly owe a huge debt of gratitude too.