

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

### **1. Staffordshire's People**

#### **1.1 "Living My Life, My Way": A Strategy for Disabled People**

"Living My Life, My Way" is a Strategy for Disabled People in Staffordshire which sets out a clear vision for all disabled people to have full and fulfilling lives as citizens in the communities in which they live. It proposes a new approach based upon disabled children and adults having access to the whole range of opportunities that are available in their own communities.

Cabinet have noted the ambitious programme of change set out in the draft Strategy and have agreed that the draft Commissioning Strategy for people with disabilities be taken forward for formal consultation.

*(Cabinet – 20 February 2013)*

#### **1.2 Independent Futures**

Independent Futures aims to improve the outcomes and the experience of assessment and brokerage services for disabled people and their families/carers, so that they are able to live the life that they want to; and to improve the way that resources are used so that disabled people are more consistently able to make choices and take control of the way that they receive support that is wanted and needed.

Cabinet have agreed the establishment of 'Independent Futures' (an assessment and brokerage service to improve the outcomes for disabled people of all ages within Staffordshire County Council) from 1 April 2013. They have also approved the further consideration of options for Independent Futures to become an independent and standalone organisation, subject to a further business case at a later date.

*(Cabinet – 20 February 2013)*

### **2. Staffordshire's Communities**

#### **2.1 A Volunteering Strategy for Staffordshire**

Without the invaluable contribution made by volunteers, many activities that the public enjoy may not be possible or may have to be delivered less often. The strategy will help the Council to focus its energies on the contributions made by volunteers and will facilitate better access to the opportunities on offer. The Council will also look at ways of supporting volunteers by making sure they are able to get the most out of the opportunities available and that they have a quality experience.

The Cabinet have agreed that the Volunteering Strategy for Staffordshire be launched via a co-ordinated communications campaign with other partners in

March 2013 to enable partners to progress the action plan through the Volunteering Strategy Working Group.

*(Cabinet – 20 February 2013)*

### **3. Our Staffordshire**

#### **3.1 2012/13 Quarter 3 Performance and Finance Report**

Cabinet have received The Quarter 3 Performance & Finance Report which provides an overview of the Council's performance and highlights the progress being made in delivering its nine priority outcomes.

*(Cabinet – 20 February 2013)*

**3.2 Portfolio Holder Delegated Decisions** - Portfolio holders have recently taken decisions in respect of the following matters:

- In approving the letting of Holding No 9 Manor Farm Estate on a fixed term tenancy under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 from 25 March 2013
- In approving the letting of Holding No 9 The Deanery Estate on a fixed term tenancy under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 from 29 September 2012
- In approving the letting of Standon Bowers School Farm on a fixed term tenancy under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995 from 25 March 2013.
- In approving:
  - (a) That, having followed a process of public consultation, Steeple View Day Centre be closed and transferred back to Trent and Dove for communal use by the residents of Highwood court and to permit the development of the existing Lunch club for the surrounding area. In doing this, those existing people who use Steeple View Day Centre and their Carers should be supported in making alternative choices for their Day Care from the options now available.
  - (b) That when all people attending the Steeple View Day Centre have made suitable alternative choices the centre be closed.
  - (c) That the date for closure be no later than the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 (in conjunction with the termination of the buildings lease).
- In approving the appointment of alternative providers to deliver childcare from seven Children's Centre settings in Staffordshire.
- In approving an ex-gratia payment in settlement of a social care related complaint.

**3.3 Forward Plan** - The Cabinet have approved the Forward Plan for the period 20 March to 17 July 2013, which contains details of the decisions which the Cabinet are expected to take during that period.

**3.4 Wave 2 City Deals** - I am pleased to announce that Staffordshire County Council, in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership, have been successful in getting through to the next stage of the City Deal process launched by the government. These deals offer councils and their partner's greater freedom, funding and powers from Government to bolster their local economies, attract new business and create new jobs for local people.

The government was impressed with the ambition of our expression of interest for the *Powerhouse central* concept making Staffordshire the key European centre for research and manufacturing of advanced materials, including ceramics, metals and polymers, thriving alongside other businesses and growth sectors in the region. It will build on and accelerate existing work to support job creation and growth across the city and county.

**3.5 i54** - The next stage of development of the award winning i54 site is underway. Through the construction of a bespoke junction on the M54 to serve the business site we are showing what local government can do to support growth and job opportunities locally.

It is especially pleasing to see our commitment and the potential of the site has been recognised as Jaguar Land Rover have recently announced plans to extend their facility creating up to a further 700 jobs in addition to the proposed 750 announced in 2011. Doubling the size of their facility is a clear indication that Staffordshire is a place to do business.

**3.6 LGiU Cllr Achievement awards**- Staffordshire County Council was part of a team of Councils which won the 'Partnership Achievement of the Year' award for i54. The LGiU recognized the immense investment of effort and time as well as the unique way in which we developed a partnership capable of delivering real change to people's lives, rather than simply save local councils money.

**P.E.B. Atkins**  
**Leader of the County Council**