

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Staffordshire's People

1.1 Progress Report – Independent Futures Programme

Cabinet have received an update on the progress of the Independent Futures Programme. They have noted the ambition and role for Independent Futures is to:

- Provide excellent assessment of an individual, their family and their circumstances using a key worker model.
- Provide excellent planning so that individuals can live their life to their full potential.
- Support individuals to access what they need. This is not just about accessing social care or health care – it will include every aspect of their lives from education, to housing or employment.

This new way of working focuses on what matters most to the people of Staffordshire and finding new, more efficient and more effective ways of working that provide an innovative approach to making sure disabled people in Staffordshire are able to remain independent and take control, creating even better, more fulfilling lives for themselves.

The Cabinet have noted that an options appraisal is to be developed and will be submitted to their meeting in January 2014 following which there will be consultation with stakeholders.

(Cabinet – 16 October 2013)

1.2 Improving the lives of Staffordshire Residents through our Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Cabinet have received a report on the Health and Wellbeing Board's strategy and ambition to improve the lives of Staffordshire residents by taking a radical and innovative approach. This is about building services around people and communities, and empowering them to create great places. The ambition is to create and embed a system of prevention, early intervention and community based services that both improves the lives of local people and addresses the current unsustainable pressure and reliance on acute services, such as hospital care. In turn, this allows us to focus our limited resources on those who need us most.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has identified through its strategy an overarching priority to reduce health inequalities within Staffordshire and a further 12 priority areas taking a whole-life-course approach which can be summarised as follows:

- Starting Well: Giving Children the best start in life (Parenting and School Readiness)
- Growing Well: Maximising potential and ability (Education, Children and Young People who are not in Employment, Education or Training, Children and Young people in the Care system)
- Living Well: Making good lifestyle choices (Alcohol, Drugs, Lifestyle, Mental Wellbeing)
- Ageing Well: Sustaining independence, choice and control (Dementia, Falls, Frail Elderly)
- Ending Well: Ensuring care and support at the end of life (End of Life Care)

Cabinet have endorsed the direction of travel of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Staffordshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and have resolved that, in order to fulfil both the Council's statutory duties and strategic intentions, its commissioning priorities and business planning be fully aligned with this strategic direction.

(Cabinet – 20 November 2013)

1.3 'Living My Life My Way' – A Strategy for Disabled People 2013 – 2018

"Living My Life, My Way", the Council's strategy for disabled people in Staffordshire, sets out a vision of a connected County where all disabled children and adults have the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy. That is why we are working with our residents, voluntary groups, and partners to find new ways to improve lives for disabled people. Our overall approach is about listening, creating the right conditions for Staffordshire's people to flourish, and allowing people to get on with achieving their goals and aspirations.

The Strategy identifies the following seven key priorities which have been developed in partnership with Disabled People and their Family Carers:-

- Best start in life.
- Lifelong learning.
- Choice and control.
- Community opportunities.
- Good health.
- A strong voice for disabled people and their families.
- Staying safe

Cabinet have given their support to the finalisation of the Strategy and its taking forward for implementation across Staffordshire.

(Cabinet – 20 November 2013)

2. Staffordshire's Communities

2.1 Keeping Staffordshire Moving: Highway Permit Scheme

Over last 4 years we have made over £140m of savings whilst freezing council tax, invested in our economy to create more jobs, and worked closer with partners to make every pound of taxpayers' money we spend have the most impact on our communities.

As part of continuing to ensure new efficient and effective ways of working, the Cabinet have given authority to the Director for Place and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure, to deal with the preparation of a highway permit scheme, including consultation with stakeholders. Through the introduction of a permit scheme for activities on the highway network, the County Council will have greater control over works, enabling:

- the promotion of better working practices;
- improved coordination and quality of works;
- better informed residents and highway users; and
- reduced impact whilst essential works to the highway or utility apparatus is taking place.

The final decision to proceed with the scheme has been delegated to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure.

(Cabinet – 16 October 2013)

2.2 Keeping Staffordshire Moving: Civil Parking Enforcement Review

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) was introduced under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and transferred the responsibility for the enforcement of non-endorseable on-street parking offences from the police to the local traffic authority. DPE was introduced in Staffordshire in two phases. The first, Tranche 1 covering the Districts of East Staffordshire, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford and Staffordshire Moorlands was introduced in 2007. Tranche 2 covered the remaining Districts of Cannock Chase, Lichfield, South Staffordshire and Tamworth was introduced in 2009. The Agreement for the Enforcement of On-Street Parking Controls with each District Council was written with a six year period in mind.

The Cabinet have given delegated authority to the Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Localism, to deal with the commissioning of new arrangements to achieve even better outcomes for parking in Staffordshire in the future.

The final decision to proceed with the new arrangements has been delegated to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Localism.

(Cabinet – 16 October 2013)

3. Our Staffordshire

3.1 Changes to Cabinet Member Portfolios

Earlier this year a new vision and priorities for the county council was agreed – to create a connected Staffordshire where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happier. This new focus, in addition to the county council taking on responsibility for public health and its continuing leadership around the future of the NHS in Staffordshire, has placed more emphasis than ever before on the health and wellbeing. The Leader of the Council has therefore asked Robbie Marshall to focus on this agenda in his continuing role as Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

In recognition of the scale of this work and the impact of future developments such as the Care Bill, the Leader of the Council has created a new role of Cabinet Member for Care, who will take on responsibility for those people in most need our support, in particular older people and those with disabilities. Alan White will take on this role having served as a Cabinet Support Member since May.

As part of these changes, Mike Lawrence will take on responsibility for the equally important area of children's services and his job title will change accordingly to Cabinet Member for Children, Communities and Localism.

3.2 Second Quarter Budget Monitoring Report

The Cabinet have received details of the financial position of the county council (including the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) at the end of the second quarter 2013/14. They noted that, at quarter 1, a forecast overspend of £4m (0.8%) was reported with a further £5m risk of undelivered procurement savings. Now at quarter 2, the forecast outturn showed a projected overspend of £9.830m (1.9%). Work was already under way within People and Place to manage and improve this position.

The Cabinet have noted the second quarter finance position and, together with the Senior Leadership Team, will agree appropriate action, the results of which will be reported in the quarter 3 report. The Cabinet have also agreed the allocation of an additional £1.3m from the corporate contingency to support Residential Fees.

In dealing with this, it is essential for us to work closer and smarter with our public sector partners who together spend over £7billion a year of public money in Staffordshire. We have a duty to make sure this money is spent as wisely and effectively as it can be to reduce the burden on taxpayers and in turn, this allows us to focus our efforts and limited resources on those who need us the most.

(Cabinet – 16 October 2013)

3.3 Strategic Property Partner - Outline Business Case

The Cabinet have considered a proposal for the County Council in partnership with Staffordshire's Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to run a competitive procurement process to identify and secure a suitable private sector supplier with whom to create a Strategic Partnership. This Partnership will unlock the potential of the property and land across Staffordshire and realise the maximum benefit from the public sector property estate so as to stimulate growth, reinvest in Staffordshire and support the delivery of the county council's vision and priorities. It is an example of working smarter and closer with our public sector colleagues to ensure we meet our challenges with new thinking.

Cabinet have agreed to the procurement of a strategic property partner, in association with Staffordshire's Police & Crime Commissioner to assist the Council with the delivery of its strategic outcomes. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Transformation, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources, has been given delegated authority to select the shortlist of potential partners to tender to be the Council's preferred partner.

(Cabinet – 16 October 2013)

3.4 Treasury Management Report for the half-year ended 30 September 2013 and Revised Annual Investment Strategy for 2013/14

The Cabinet have received a summary of the County Council's Treasury Management activities for the half-year ended 30 September 2013. They noted that a cautious approach to investments was being maintained. The policy of using cash instead of borrowing continued to generate significant savings, helping reduce the average interest paid on our loans to below the local authority average.

Overall the report showed that the Council's borrowing and investment activities were being undertaken prudently and sensibly.

(Cabinet – 16 October 2013)

3.5 Recommendation for Member Seat on Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust

In April 2012, the County Council entered into an agreement under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 with Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust (SSOTP) for the delivery of the council's health related functions, specifically adult social care assessment and case management for older people and adults with physical/sensory impairments. The Council are about to commence fresh discussions with SSOTP regarding the future arrangements of the partnership for 2015 and beyond. As part of those negotiations, Cabinet have agreed that the County Council should explore the opportunity for an

Elected Member to join the Board of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership NHS Trust.

(Cabinet – 20 November 2013)

Portfolio Holder Delegated Decisions

Portfolio holders have recently taken decisions in respect of the following matters:

- The acceptance of the contract award of £2,285,952 from the Skills Funding Agency for ESF NEET provision for delivery in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- That following a process of social work review and care planning, people currently attending Leek Day Centre are supported to move into alternative day care options, following which the Centre will be closed.
- That following a process of social work review and care planning, people currently attending Cheadle Day Centre are supported to move into alternative day care options, following which the Centre will be closed.
- The transitional arrangements for the Infrastructure+ project.
- The payment of compensation of £4,750.00 to the parent of a service user for providing support to her son which should have been funded/provided by Staffordshire County Council.
- The disposal of 2.1 acres of land comprising part of the site of the former County Council offices at Riverway, Stafford, to Panacea Property Group Limited.
- The commencement of a Statutory Consultation on a proposal to enlarge Rykneld Primary School, Burton upon Trent from 469 to 630 places.
- The sale of 0.91 acres of land at Stafford Road, Gnosall to The Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance Incorporated to enable them to extend their burial ground at St Lawrence Church, Gnosall.
- The purchase from Staffordshire University the property known as Nelson Library comprising a site of 3.0 acres situated on the Stafford Campus for the provision of a new two form of entry primary school.

3.6 Forward Plan

The Cabinet have approved the Forward Plan for the period 18 December 2013 to 16 April 2014, which contains details of the decisions which the Cabinet are expected to take during that period.

3.7. Parliamentary Issues: High Speed Rail and the Care Bill

Over the next few months two key pieces of legislation that will have an impact on Staffordshire will begin in the House of Commons.

Having met with some of our local MPs I was able to press them on the importance of the bills to us. Unsurprisingly, some of our MPs share our concerns regarding High Speed Rail.

However, the Care Bill is another matter which we are working on. The Care Bill creates the single biggest changes to social care since a national system was introduced in 1948. Broadly, I welcome the bill as long overdue which can address some of the anomalies and flaws in the current system.

But the Care Bill must not be prescriptive and undermine what we are doing locally. We are committed to building services around people and communities, giving them the power and not simply maintaining services that we cannot afford and do not support hard pressed households and taxpayers.

Members should be aware that Alan White, Cabinet Member for Care, is working closely on this issue and the Council will respond strongly to ensure that Bill is in the best interests of Staffordshire.

3.8. County Council Network Annual Conference

Staffordshire County Council remains a committed member of both the LGA and the CCN. I was privileged to once again attend the CCN annual conference in Chester.

The CCN has transformed itself on to a more campaign focused approach – recognising a need to push for recognition of what Shire areas have achieved and can achieve. As part of the event I gave a speech on commercialism alongside Jonathan Flowers from Capita. To me the opportunities of looking at new approaches and funding is a key part of ensuring that County areas can continue to lead and remain relevant to people's lives.

The conference covered a variety of areas from social care to finance and over one and half days we were able to share the challenges and approaches taking place up and down the country. I was able to highlight how we have achieved over £140m of savings whilst freezing council tax and investing in our economy; creating jobs and opportunities for people to access.

But a common thread was that the task wasn't finished – we are not alone in recognising the need to be more creative, adapt and innovate. But again I found people interested in what we are doing

3.9. Ivanovo Delegation

Members will also be aware of the recent visit from our friends from Ivanovo. Our regular exchange has become one of the key fixtures in our calendars and

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once again the visit developed our close ties and sown the seeds for future work around education services, international exchange as well as services for elderly people. In return, I understand that there is potential for more joint working around finance and audit – especially in demonstrating the social value of what our councils have done.

It is an example of how we can demonstrate and share our leadership with colleagues around the world, and gain insight and advice in return. When we think back over the 14 years the project has run, we can see how much the world has changed and we have changed. I look forward to next year.

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