

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. Staffordshire's Communities

1.1 A50 Growth Corridor

The Cabinet has approved proposals for the County Council to act as 'delivery partner' in respect of two A50 Growth Corridor investment projects. The first project will include the construction of the completely new junction to the west of Uttoxeter. This junction will provide access to the proposed housing and employment site to the south of the A50, and the existing and new JCB factories. The second project will be to reconfigure the existing Dove Way bridge over the A50 in Uttoxeter, by converting it to a grade separated junction. A planning application for the second project is not due to be submitted until 2015 and will first be subject to further public consultation.

(Cabinet – 19 March 2014)

1.2 Household Waste Recycling Centre's consultation

Since details of the proposed consultation on the Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) were made public, a possible opportunity had arisen at one of the HWRC sites which was currently commercially sensitive and could affect the dynamics of the proposal. The Cabinet have therefore decided to defer the consultation on the review to enable that opportunity to be explored further.

(Cabinet – 16 April 2014)

2. Staffordshire's People

2.1 Achieving Excellence for Young People

The Cabinet has considered the findings arising from the public consultation with young people and their families, and key stakeholders (carried out between 8 January 2014 and 26 February 2014), on the proposals for the development of a new approach to improving outcomes for young people in Staffordshire.

They have decided that, following formal staff consultation, the Implementation Plan be taken forward. The Implementation Plan details district transitional planning arrangements and the distribution of resources in accordance with need, in order to ensure adverse impacts are both managed and mitigated.

Cabinet has also accepted the following recommendations of the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee:

- That the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and the Cabinet Support Member for Public Health and Community Safety provide a report to the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee no later than 31st October 2014 on the progress of the Implementation Plan, as well as providing evidence to the Select Committee of the levels of engagement of young people aged 13 to

19 (and up to 24 with learning disabilities) in activities following the implementation of the proposals.

- That the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for People be given authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and the Cabinet Support Member for Public Health and Community Safety, to work with local Members wherever possible to shape local youth offers.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director for People has also been given authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and the Cabinet Support Member for Public Health and Community Safety, to take all such steps, decisions and actions as are necessary to give effect to the Cabinet's decision.

(Cabinet – 19 March 2014)

2.2 Achieving Excellence for Early Years

Cabinet has approved the start of an engagement exercise with residents (including parents), partners and stakeholders on the principles of a new integrated approach to early years which will focus on improving outcomes for children, early intervention, parental responsibility and building resilience within families and communities.

A further report will be brought back to Cabinet in September 2014 summarising the outcome of the engagement exercise and setting out detailed proposals for the new approach to early years.

(Cabinet – 19 March 2014)

2.3 Better Care Fund

The Cabinet has approved proposals detailing how the County Council, working with NHS and District Council colleagues, will implement locally the national initiative to establish a pooled budget (the "Better Care Fund") across the Health and Social Care economy in Staffordshire. In 2014/15, £1.1bn (made up of £859m transfer already planned plus a further £241m) nationally will transfer into a single fund under a Section 256 agreement to Local Authorities to support adult social care and to enable localities to prepare for further transition in 2015/16. In 2015/16, the funding will be substantially increased to £3.8bn through a transfer from existing CCG budgets. The funds are intended to be used to promote preventative and community-based care in order to reduce the impact on the acute sector and NHS.

(Cabinet – 19 March 2014)

2.4 Ofsted Inspection Report

The County Council has received a "Good" rating by Ofsted following the inspection of the Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, which took place over a four week period in January/February 2014. Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board was also rated 'Good' by Ofsted – the first time under Ofsted's tougher inspection regime that both children's services and an SCB were both rated 'Good' simultaneously.

Cabinet has extended its thanks to staff and partners for their hard work and dedication in achieving the improvements that have led to this result over a period of only two and a half years.

An action plan to address the non-urgent areas for improvement identified by Ofsted is to be drafted and presented to the Children's Improvement Board.

(Cabinet – 16 April 2014)

2.5 Determination of Statutory Proposal to Enlarge Rykneld Primary School, Burton upon Trent

The Cabinet has agreed a statutory proposal to enlarge Rykneld Primary School, Burton upon Trent by increasing Reception places from 67 to 90 by 1 September 2019, conditional upon the granting of planning permission under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by 31 December 2014. The proposal is supported by the school community and during the statutory four-week "representation period" no objections or comments were received.

(Cabinet – 19 March 2014)

3. Our Staffordshire

3.1 An update on Inward Investment in Staffordshire: Powerhouse Central - A Wave 2 City Deal for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire

Cabinet has received details of the finalised Wave 2 City Deal agreed with Central Government. The City Deal includes plans to supply locally-produced, sustainable energy to major employers. It is anticipated that that the Deal will see more than £113m invested in the local economy and 20,000 new jobs created over the next 10 years. Cabinet has agreed to continue to develop the necessary governance arrangements with the Local Enterprise Partnership and Stoke-on-Trent City Council as agreed by Full Council at their meeting on 12 December 2013.

(Cabinet – 19 March 2014)

3.2 Achieving Excellence Quarterly Performance Report

The Cabinet has received a quarterly report detailing the progress being made against the County Council's three priority outcomes of:

- The people of Staffordshire will be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth.
- The people of Staffordshire will be healthier and more independent.
- The people of Staffordshire will feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

(Cabinet – 19 March 2014)

Fourth Quarter Budget Monitoring Report

The Cabinet has received details of the financial position of the County Council (including the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) at the end of the fourth quarter 2013/14. They noted that the forecasted overspend over the last quarter had been reduced from 1.6% to 1.5%. This anticipated overspend was primarily due to the significant pressure resulting from the cost of social care for both adults and children.

The Cabinet has also approved proposals to transfer the capital resource no longer required to finance the Redhill project to meet the funding gap on the Alton Growth Corridor project.

(Cabinet – 16 April 2014)

4. Other Items

4.1 Working with local Government

One of the crucial roles that the County Council plays is sharing its experience and learning with others. I am pleased to inform colleagues of the successful visits we have had from other councils.

West Sussex District visited us in early April and this was an opportunity to highlight the way we work with District and Borough Councils through District Deals and our wider partnership approaches.

4.2 Working with Partners

I wanted to make Council aware of the tremendous success of our recent Staffordshire Hundred event. The event focused on the issue of Health, which remains a key issue for us and our partners in the NHS. We were delighted to be joined at the event by the Stephen Dorrell MP, Chair of the Health Select Committee. Mr Dorrell's input had a hugely positive impact, stimulating discussion on how we address our health challenges. It reinforced for me the crucial role that the County Council has and is playing in drawing partners together, to focus our resources and approaches. This is further highlighted through our various external and internal partnership approaches such as the Shire Leaders and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Strategic Consortium which are showing how we can work together and achieve on key issues like education and skills.

4.3 High Speed Rail 2

Following the passage of the High Speed Rail bill to its second reading I wanted to provide members with an update on the work we are doing to ensure that Staffordshire benefits from the plans.

Our position remains clear – we oppose HS2, but it's a decision that rests fundamentally with Parliament. Government clearly has the support of Parliament for

its proposals so our overriding aim is to ensure that the Bill contains the right mitigation measures to protect our local economy and our precious environment.

As part of these efforts, we have submitted a compelling bid for the national HS2 College to be built in Stafford. The Government invited areas around the country to submit bids and we see this as an opportunity for new investment in education in the county. While this in no way affects our opposition to HS2 as a whole, it is further evidence of the work we are doing to gain any benefits we can if this project goes ahead.

The next stage for the Bill will be the Petitioning stage and our officers are working hard to prepare our petition that will try to secure a commitment to maintain for the future current rail service levels for Stafford. This will ensure that our connection to Birmingham Airport and London will be preserved in Phase 1 of HS2 and bring some tangible benefits to the county.

We will keep members up to date as this progresses.