

Statement of the Leader of the Council

1. First Quarter Budget Monitoring Report 2017/18

The Cabinet have received an overview of the county council's performance (including the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) and the progress being made in delivering the Council's three priority outcomes at the end of the first quarter 2017/18. They noted that:

- The latest revenue forecast outturn showed an overspend of £8.6m (1.7%), compared to the balanced MTFS position. The main pressures related to the new Children's System (£3.7m) as a result of timescales agreed with Cabinet for implementation, SEN Home to School transport (£1.0m), Entrust Contract negotiations (£0.8m) and HR Terms and Conditions (£1.6m).
- The latest capital outturn projection is £150.2m, compared to the MTFS position of £117.6m, an increase of 27.7%. This projection is a fully funded position. There has been significant reprofiling of schemes, including basic needs programmes, Shugborough, Newcastle Hub and emergency pothole works.

The Cabinet have approved the allocation of £0.504m from the contingency budget to support the costs of the Apprenticeship Levy in 2017/18. They have also approved the additional investment of £5m for repairing potholes, to be funded from borrowing.

(Cabinet – 19 July 2017)

2. Quarter 1, 2017/18 Performance Report

The Cabinet have received an overview of the county council's performance (including the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy) and the progress being made in delivering the Council's three priority outcomes at the end of the first quarter 2017/18. They noted that:

- In April 2017, the percentage of working age Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants (including Universal Credit claimants) in Staffordshire (1.1%) continued to be below both the West Midlands (2.5%) and national rates (1.9%).
- In April 2017, 88.0% of all schools in Staffordshire were rated as 'Good or Outstanding' by Ofsted, which is similar to the national average (88.9%) and has increased since April 2016 (83.2%). The target is for 92% of Staffordshire's schools to be 'Good or Outstanding' by August 2017.
- The infant mortality rate was 4.9 per 1,000 live births in Staffordshire which was higher than the national rate (3.9) with Cannock Chase district (6.3) having the highest rate in the county. A number of risk factors, such as poor housing, low employment, teenage pregnancy and substance misuse are known to increase infant mortality, so understanding these provide the

opportunity to ensure early intervention and prevention strategies are appropriately targeted locally.

- In March 2017, there were 994 looked after children in Staffordshire. Of these, 8.7% (86) were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), compared to 7.8% (76) at the beginning of the financial year (April 2016). At the end of Quarter 3, 2016/17 (the date of the latest benchmarking data), Staffordshire had a rate of 58.7 per 10,000 looked after children which was lower than the West Midlands rate of 75.

At the end of Quarter 3, 2016/17 (the date of the latest benchmarking data), the rate of children subject of a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 population (35.8) was lower than the West Midlands average (44.4).

(Cabinet – 19 July 2017)

3. Highways and Transport Capital Programme 2017/18

The Cabinet have approved the Highways and Transport Capital Programme for 2017/18. The Councils Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (HIAMP) and District Transport Strategies (DTS) will ensure that capital spending is clearly aligned to corporate priorities and delivers value for money.

The Council's Commissioner for Highways and the Built County is to report progress and proposed in-year alterations on a quarterly basis for approval by the Cabinet Member for Commercial.

(Cabinet – 19 July 2017)

4. Treasury Management Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2017

The Cabinet have received a summary of the County Council's Treasury Management activities for the year ended 31 March 2017. The report summarised the borrowing and investment decisions taken throughout the year in the light of the interest rates and economic conditions prevailing at the time.

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

(Cabinet – 19 July 2016)

5. Public Analyst and Scientific Services

The Cabinet have considered the outcome of a review recently carried out into the Public Analyst and Scientific Services. They noted that in recent years, the changing nature of this sector means that the laboratory in Stafford is losing money annually.

The Cabinet have decided to close the Public Analyst and Scientific Services in-house laboratory and to continue to protect the public by commissioning the work from other providers, rather than doing it in-house, and thus deliver the same service to the public at a lower cost.

The County Council will also appoint a Public Analyst and Agricultural Analyst from one of the five remaining Local Authority laboratories or alternatively or from an approved private sector company.

(Cabinet – 19 July 2016)