

Leaders Report

It's been an incredibly busy period of time since we last met together on the 16th July, and this Administration continues to push forward meeting its Election Manifest promises alongside reacting to ever raising situations.

The month started with me having the pleasure of meeting with the Judge (unfortunately only one arrived) who had toured the Authority assessing our parks and open spaces with regard to the Heart of England, Britain in Bloom competition who commended the Authority, its staff but most importantly, the volunteers who give up hundreds of hours a year to help the Authority achieve its Corporate Priorities.

This visit also coincided with the delivery of a Silver Award Royal at the Horticultural Society's national flower bed competition at Tatton Park flower show. My thanks to Dave Adams, Roger Tate and their extensive teams who represented the Authority with distinction and we should all be very proud of their efforts.

Away from the Civic Centre I was pleased to add my signature to the Stoke and Staffordshire Local enterprise Partnership's new Regulatory agreement which seeks to harmonise all the district's and upper tiers responses with regard to regulatory services, a huge amount of effort went into aligning Authorities and this work in part also has created a new Regulatory Document here at the Borough Council which clearly states the help available from our Departments be it Environmental or Licensing. The work completed by Nesta Barker and her team whilst laborious, will give this Authority a clear steer when dealing with the General Public.

During the Month I've also met with various Leaders and Chief Executives from places as diverse as Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke on Trent to discuss matters of mutual interest ranging from HS2, the Local Plan, Shared Services and future Leisure Facilities provision in Kidsgrove. As well as Public Sector Partners, I have also met with Private and Third Sector Partners on a regular basis, including representatives from VAST, Aspire and Staffordshire Police.

Economic Development within the Borough goes from strength to strength and I'm pleased to report that a major investment has been announced at the Lymelight Boulevard (formerly The Square) which could equate to several million pounds over the lifetime of the Lease. All of the empty units within the complex will be brought back into use, office space, never used since the building was opened to the public, will be made available and hundreds of jobs will be created not only by the opening of the units but Reel Cinema and other companies have already been lined up to bring new jobs into the Town Centre. This is just one example of the good work that the Economic Development Team and Newcastle Town Centre Partnership continue to deliver on this Authority's behalf.

Again in the Town Centre, the Authority was pleased to welcome Assessors from the Association of Town & City Management who undertook an accreditation process similar to Green Flag Award for parks and Blue Flag for beaches. It leads to Purple Flag status for town centres that meet or surpass the standards of excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy. We still await the official results of the Assessment but I'm quietly confident that the work that Sarah Moore and her

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team, alongside a wide array of partners, put in to this project, will provide us with another reason to be proud of the Town Centre which has transformed over the last couple of years.

I was pleased to confirm and expand on several new policies over the last two months. During August I met with Stella Creasy MP to announce a Borough wide Financial Inclusion Project that will culminate with the removal of all Pay Day Lenders / High Interest Lenders from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough. These companies have no place in our High Street and with educational support from the Staffordshire Financial Inclusion Group, and practical support with the presence of both Staffordshire Credit Union and Moneywise (A local social lender) I'm confident that the Borough's dependence on high interest borrowing will be a thing of the past.

Work on the Pilot Landlords Accreditation Scheme continues on the Miners Estate in Kidsgrove and when this is proven to be successful it is my attention to target areas of concern with similar schemes to reinvigorate areas that suffered decline due to social economic factors in the last several years.

My commitment to the people of Kidsgrove with regard to a new leisure facility continues and a working group has been formed to establish need, preferred locations and potential funding options. This building is critical in the eyes of this administration and the Cabinet and I will ensure that not only that we take the lead on this project, but other partners such as the County Council honour not only their commitment of the District Deal, but more simply, the people of Kidsgrove who deserve better than the run down facility they currently suffer.

One final meeting I held this month was a meeting with Nigel Eggleton, of First Limited, known as Potteries Buses locally, to discuss their timetable changes. These discussions will be long but important as they affect thousands of our residents and first signs are that First Limited is very receptive to constructive dialogue. Nigel is due to attend a Public Meeting on the 17th September where I hope he will announce a solution to a problem in Talke but can I ask that all Councillors with time table alterations to contact me with any concerns and I will pass them on.

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