

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL TO FULL COUNCIL – 15TH JULY 2015

Submitted by: Councillor Elizabeth Shenton

Portfolio: All

Wards affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update to Members on the activities and decisions of Cabinet together with the Forward Plan.

Recommendation

That the statement of the Leader of the Council be received and noted.

Reasons

To update Council Members on the activities and decisions of the Cabinet and to allow questions and comments on the Statement to the relevant Portfolio Holders.

1. **Background**

I have now appointed my Cabinet and our portfolios are as follows:

Councillor Elizabeth Shenton, Leader, Portfolio Holder for Policy, People and Partnerships
Councillor Terry Turner, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Finance, IT and Customer
Councillor Ann Beech, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling
Councillor Tony Kearon, Safer Communities
Councillor Bert Proctor, Planning and Housing
Councillor Amelia Rout, Leisure, Culture and Localism
Councillor John Williams, Town Centres, Business and Assets

2. **Cabinet Meetings**

Cabinet has met once since the last meeting of Full Council, on 10th June 2015. There will be another Cabinet meeting next Wednesday. Below is a summary of actions and decisions taken, along with a link to the Forward Plan. (For further background to the Cabinet's decisions please refer to the actual published Cabinet agenda).

3. **Newcastle and Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnerships Nominations**

As one of the Portfolios is now "Town Centres, Business and Assets" it was decided that going forward this Cabinet Member would be the nominated person to represent the Council on the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership and also the Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership. For this year, however, it was agreed that Councillor Mrs Elsie Bates would remain as our representative until May 2016. Councillor John Williams has taken up his position on the Newcastle Town Centre Partnership with immediate effect.

4. **The Newcastle Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID)**

Cabinet agreed that this Council would vote in favour of the Business Improvement District. Cabinet also agreed that the Council would become a member of the Newcastle Business Improvement District Company.

The ballot process for the BID commenced on the 17th June and runs until the 16th July. The 3 strategic objectives of the BID Business Plan are (i) to promote Newcastle under Lyme; (ii) develop the distinctive Newcastle experience and (iii) growth, development and investment. The BID count takes place on the 17th July.

5. **Newcastle-under-Lyme Playing Pitch Strategy 2015 – 2020**

Cabinet approved the Playing Pitch Strategy and this will be the basis for making strategic decisions on future playing pitch provision and associated facilities across the Borough. Cabinet gave a renewed commitment to public consultation on any surplus sites arising from this Strategy that will subsequently not be needed to meet our Green Space requirements. I would like to thank the Active and Cohesive Communities Scrutiny Committee for reviewing and supporting the Strategy, and their input was valuable.

6. **Newcastle and Stoke Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

Cabinet commended adoption of the final version of the SCI and this is being tabled at the Council meeting this evening.

7. **Nelson Place Roundabout**

Councillor Wenslie Naylor submitted a question to Cabinet about the renovation of Nelson Place roundabout, and the move towards a more sustainable planting scheme, with specific regard to the sculpture which will soon be installed. Councillor Ann Beech was pleased to be able to supply a detailed response. (If any elected member would like further information then I am sure Councillor Beech will be able to supply a written version of her response.)

Other Items

8. **LGA Conference**

The LGA Conference was held in Harrogate from 30th June to 2nd July. I attended along with Councillor Bert Proctor and the Chief Executive.

9. **Historic England**

I would like to thank Councillor Wenslie Naylor for attending the reception to celebrate the launch of Historic England on behalf of the Borough.

10. **Governance Review**

I thought it would be useful, particularly for newly elected members, to give an update on the Governance Review. The Governance Committee last met on the 29th May and as only 20 questionnaires had been returned we agreed to reissue this to all elected members. The next meeting is on the 16th July when we will start to focus on the size of the Council. The two key issues that need to be decided are Council size and the Electoral Cycle. Once these have been determined we will hold a Special Council meeting to resolve any recommendation, and then a time line and programme of work can then be agreed with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

11. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan covering the period 28 May 2015 to 3 September 2015 can be found at:
<http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/forwardplan>

I am aware that the Forward Plan requires some updating and format changes. This is something that I will be working on with officers between now and the next meeting of Council.

Councillor Elizabeth Shenton
Leader of the Council