

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Submitted by : Councillor Stephen Sweeney

Portfolio: All

Wards affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update for Members on the activities and decisions of the 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 enable questions and comments on the statement to relevant Portfolio Holders.

1. **Background**

Cabinet last met on 7 September 2011. 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 Cabinet agenda of 7 September).

2. **Financial and Performance Management Report**

The financial and performance review for 2011/12 (first quarter) was discussed. Most services are performing with the majority of targets being met.

3. **Locality Action Partnership**

Cabinet were asked to review the report 'The Story of Our Place' and agreed with the recommendations subject to it being an ongoing review. A formalised action plan was requested by Cabinet.

4. **Transformation Programme Update**

There are several programmes being carried out at the Council to make sure we have efficient, effective and modernised services.

The accommodation review will see the police, pct and staff from Staffordshire County Council occupy available space in the Civic Offices. This will mean officers of the Council moving to free-up identified space for partners to occupy.

5. **Jubilee 2**

A number of reports were received, these included fees and charges, future management options for Leisure Services and a report on the progress of the building itself. The program is within budget and is 75% complete. Facilities Partner Ltd has been selected as the café

operator. The firm, based in Tamworth, employs local people and they also work with local suppliers and source local farm products.

Jubilee 2 is set to officially open on 7 January 2012, the start of the Olympic year.

6. **Bateswood Local Nature Reserve – Management Plan**

A petition has been presented by a ward Member on behalf of local residents asking the Council to allow angling on the pool at Bateswood Local Nature Reserve.

It was agreed that consultation should take place to allow for angling and additional bridle routes.

6. **Grants Review and Third Sector Commissioning**

It was agreed to support the recommendations of the grants review. A detailed report of the work of the New Vic Theatre was also requested.

7. **Rough Sleepers Outreach Service**

It was agreed to jointly commission a future service with Stoke-on-Trent City Council to combine both Councils resources and to develop a service which meets the needs of both authorities whilst at the same time making efficiencies.

8. **Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Task Group Recommendations**

Cllr Loades and the eleven members of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group were thanked for their work on the Newcastle Development Programme.

In future, all surplus non-operational land belonging to the Council will be reviewed as part of the Site Allocations Development Plan which is set to get underway in Newcastle in the autumn. Other landowners, whether they are the County Council, health service, MOD or private landowners will be invited to put forward sites.

9. **Asset Disposal of Land at Drayton Road**

Cabinet were asked to approve a piece of land for sale off Market Drayton Road in Loggerheads for the new community fire station as part of a Staffordshire-wide improvement programme.

10. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan can be found at:

<http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/forwardplan>

The next Cabinet meeting is to be held on 19 October. A report detailing the decisions made at this meeting will be made to the Council meeting on 14 December.

Councillor Stephen Sweeney
Leader of the Council