

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL TO FULL COUNCIL – 3RD APRIL 2019

Submitted by: Councillor Simon Tagg

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 Leader & Cabinet and to allow questions and comments to be made on the Statement.

1. Cabinet Meetings

Cabinet has met twice since the last Full Council of 30th January 2019 (6th February and 20th March 2019). Decisions are detailed under items 2 and 3 of this report.

2. 6th February 2019

2.1 Air Quality Ministerial Direction (and again on 20th March)

Cabinet Members discussed the ministerial direction served by DEFRA on Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Borough Council with regards to reducing nitrogen dioxide levels and to implement a bus engine retrofit scheme to busses travelling on the A53.

Cabinet noted the content of the Strategic Outline Case, which includes options for: A City Centre / A53 traffic management scheme; Etruria Valley Link Road and A500 Improvements, plus Council boundary scale Low Emission Strategy.

Cabinet did not support options of: A City Centre / A53 or Council Boundary Scale Workplace Parking Levy; or a City Centre / A53 chargeable access restriction (clean air zone).

I have written to local MP Paul Farrelly to ask for his support in lobbying Central Government against any form of parking levy or chargeable clean air zone.

Cabinet firmly believes that there is a highway/transport solution to help reduce the pollution levels and that any form of parking levy or chargeable clean air zone will damage businesses and our town centre.

The Council is working closely with the City Council, Staffordshire County Council and DEFRA on a preferred policy solution that will come to Cabinet by October.

3. **20th March 2019**

3.1 **Lyme Lottery Review**

Cabinet have asked officers to look into ways of boosting the Lyme Lottery to help good causes.

The Lyme Lottery was set up in 2017 by the previous administration following the cut of £43,000 as a result of the scrapping of the Community Chest budget.

Over the last year the Lyme Lottery has raised just short of £27,000.

Cabinet have asked the Health & Wellbeing Partnership Scrutiny Committee to consider further development opportunities for the Lyme Lottery at its next meeting.

3.2 **Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Pledge (VCE)**

Cabinet has agreed to sign-up to the VCE Pledge which commits the Council to working in collaboration with the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

The Pledge has been reviewed and is endorsed by “Team Staffordshire”, an umbrella organisation of voluntary sector bodies and District and County Council representatives.

A good example of the Pledge in practice is the Council’s partnership with the voluntary sector which is an integral part of securing the future of our iconic Guildhall.

3.3 **Financial and Performance Management Report to End of Quarter Three (October – December) 2018 – 2019**

Cabinet reviewed the Performance Data for Quarter Three and noted that a number of key indicators were above target.

Cabinet Members outlined measures that were in place where indicators were below target and actions taken to address those.

The Finance & Asset Performance Scrutiny Committee will review the Finance and Management Report at its meeting on 11th April 2019.

4. **Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) Bid**

The Council has now submitted its “expression of interest” bid to the Future High Streets Fund for a share of Government money aimed at revitalising the nation’s town centres.

The bid totalling £420,000 would be used for several pieces of work linked to the wider regeneration of the Ryecroft area in Newcastle town centre.

The bid is based around our new Corporate Priority of Creating A Town Centre For All and builds on the work already taking place to revitalise our historic market, reviewing the car parking strategy and CCTV with the aim of creating a vibrant and safe town centre that encompasses day and night-time populations to create footfall for the local businesses.

Our key local partners – Keele University, Newcastle and Stafford College Group; the Business Improvement District; Support Staffordshire; Staffordshire County Council and others have written letters of support for the bid.

It is expected that the Government will make an announcement in the summer about successful bids that will go through to a next phase of the process which involves submitting a detailed business case.

5. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan January to April 2019 (01/02/2019 to 31/05/2019) can be found at:

<https://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=94&RP=118>

**Councillor Simon Tagg
Leader of the Council**