

**STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL TO FULL COUNCIL – 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Submitted by:** Councillor Simon Tagg

**Portfolio:** All

**Wards affected:** All

<p><b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b></p> <p>To provide an update to Members on the activities and decisions of Cabinet together with the Forward Plan.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation</u></b></p> <p>That the statement of the Leader of the Council be received and noted.</p>
<p><b><u>Reasons</u></b></p> <p>To update Council Members on the activities and decisions of the Leader &amp; Cabinet and to allow questions and comments to be made on the Statement.</p>

1. **Cabinet Meetings**

Cabinet has met six times since the last Full Council of 19<sup>th</sup> February: virtually on 18<sup>th</sup> March; 22<sup>nd</sup> April; 20<sup>th</sup> May; 10<sup>th</sup> June and 8<sup>th</sup> July; and in person on 9<sup>th</sup> September. A selection of decisions are detailed under item 3 of this report.

2. **Coronavirus Pandemic and Recovery - Getting Back On Track**

We are living in unprecedented times and at the onset of the Pandemic, the Council established an Incident Management Team to co-ordinate its response to ensure that support for local residents and businesses was provided and to enable the Council to maintain key services, whilst protecting the welfare of officers.

Following the easing of the national lockdown the Council has focussed on five key strands for recovery:

- Reopening safe and successful retail centres
- Supporting Health and Wellbeing
- Economic recovery
- Stepping up Council Services
- Financial Recovery

I am sure all Members will join me in thanking Council officers, staff and partner organisations for their hard work during the pandemic and lock-down to keep Council services functioning for our residents.

### 3. **Cabinet Decisions**

#### 3.1 **New CCTV System – Newcastle Town Centre**

The new CCTV system is now operational in the Town Centre. New cameras harnessing the latest technology have replaced ageing equipment and more cameras have been installed in new locations. This has been jointly funded by the Council and Newcastle-under-Lyme Business Improvement District.

The cameras will operate 24 hours a day and are monitored at key times and the Police have access to live footage to help them deal with any incidents in the town in real time.

CCTV has the benefit of making people feel safer in the Town Centre as well as deterring those who may want to engage in criminal activities.

#### 3.2 **Joint Housing Allocations Policy**

Cabinet has approved an updated Joint Housing Allocations Policy with Aspire, which creates a single application process for those people looking for housing in the Borough. This replaces the previous two separate platforms for applications and will enable a smarter, more efficient and streamlined housing register service for our customers and residents.

#### 3.3 **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy Review**

Cabinet endorsed a revised Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedures, which provides a framework for Council officers, Members and Partner Organisations to respond to complaints of ASB on behalf of the public and reflects the changes in National Guidance as well as local circumstances.

#### 3.4 **Air Quality – A53 Bus Retrofit Contract**

A contract has been awarded for the retrofit of 25 buses operated by First Potteries Ltd. to bring them up to Euro 6 Emission Standards to ensure that those buses using the A53 Etruria Road achieve compliance in line with the relevant Air Quality Direction.

#### 3.5 **Pre-Validation Checking Scheme**

The Council has introduced a new pre-validation checking service for Planning Applications, which enables applicants to progress through the Planning process more quickly, helping to minimise the risk of unexpected delays, allowing residents, local businesses and developers to progress developments within the Borough.

#### 3.6 **Local Planning Enforcement Plan**

Cabinet adopted a Local Planning Enforcement Plan to replace the previous one from February 2009. It sets out a framework, by which the Council will approach its Enforcement duties, a method to prioritise the most serious breaches of Planning Control, the measures that can be taken via Enforcement and targets for the progression of cases.

This will give Members and the public more confidence that breaches of planning control are being investigated and dealt with in a timely manner.

#### 3.7 **Future High Streets Fund & Advanced Town Deal Funding**

The Council has submitted its bid to the Future High Streets Fund to transform Newcastle Town Centre. The plans include the redevelopment of the Ryecroft site, including pedestrian routes into the Town Centre, development opportunities to replace the Midway

Car Park and enhancements to the Historic Market. The Government will announce successful bids later in the autumn.

Bids have been submitted for both Kidsgrove (£750k) and Newcastle (£1m) for projects as part of Town Deal Advanced Funding. These include Health and Wellbeing and facilities for young people in Kidsgrove; and in Newcastle advancing regeneration opportunities in Newcastle Town Centre and in Knutton.

We expect to hear if these bids have been successful in the coming days.

### 3.8 **Delivery of the Council's New Recycling Service**

The Council's new Recycling Service was rolled out across the Borough ahead of schedule during June and July 2020.

This has replaced the failing multiple box system with a large blue wheelie bin for a range of recyclables and a blue bag for paper and cardboard. The food waste collections have also resumed following the Coronavirus lockdown.

The new system makes it easier for residents to recycle and has increased the range of materials that can be recycled at the kerbside.

## 4. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan can be found at:

<https://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=118&RD=0>

**Councillor Simon Tagg**  
**Leader of the Council**