

## **Report from the Leader of the Council**

### **1. Decisions since the last meeting.**

Since the last Council meeting the Cabinet has met once, on the 6<sup>th</sup> March and the decisions of that meeting are available here.

<http://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/documents/g1597/Decisions%2006th-Mar-2013%2019.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=2>

### **2. Localism Act – Community Right to Challenge**

Cabinet approved mechanism by which the Council would be compliant with the Localism Act and, in particular, the Community Right to Challenge. Under this process, any and all aspects of the work undertaken and services offered by the Council or its contractors can be challenged by the community if they feel a better deal is available elsewhere.

Cabinet decided to adopt a restricted system which would impose a window of opportunity for a right to challenge to be started as this would help prevent against large national infrastructure organisations using the process to progress creeping privatisation.

### **3. Apprenticeship Scheme**

Cabinet approved the allocation of £40,000 towards a shared apprenticeship scheme to provide additional apprenticeship places in the Borough with the Council acting as an administrative hub. The Council has also teamed up with Paul Farrelly MP and Newcastle under Lyme College as part of the 100 – in – 100 campaign.

The new scheme will create, initially, 12 new apprenticeships and through recharging host organisations, it is hoped that this number will increase.

### **4. Newcastle of the World Alliance**

The Cabinet agreed to continue to be part of the Newcastle of the World alliance and contribute £2500 to a continued secretariat function. The work undertaken by the Mayor and Mayoress was thanked, particularly the links fostering closer cultural exchanges between schools. The matter has been referred to the Economic Development Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

### **5. Affordable Housing Partnership**

The Cabinet agreed to enter into an affordable housing partnership with the aim of using the Council's brownfield land assets to stimulate the building of social and affordable housing. The Cabinet is committed to returning the Council to a place where it can build affordable and social housing in conjunction with our local housing provider partners.

A joint feasibility study is being undertaken to identify economically viable sites where both partners have land interests and this is being jointly funded by both partners.

### **6. Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership**

The second in a series of meetings has taken place with businesses and elected members in Kidsgrove. At the most recent meeting, it was agreed that until a full CIC was

established an interim work programme would commence with work area being drawn from the results of survey work undertaken with local businesses. The next meeting will appoint a chair who, as with the Newcastle Town Centre CIC, will be from the private sector and the partnership business-led.

#### **7. Newcastle Foodbank**

Following a meeting with the organisers of the Newcastle Foodbank, the Council has provided a one off grant of £5000 to assist with the necessary expansion of the Foodbank in order to meet the ever growing need.

#### **8. Additional Recycling Materials**

The council has expanded the kerbside recycling programme to include small household electrical items. These items can be placed in an ordinary carrier bag and placed in the blue box.

#### **9. Forward Plan**

Forthcoming cabinet items can be found in the forward plan.

<http://modern.gov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=22&RP=118>