



Leader's announcements to Council - 10 May 2017

Following last week's by-election, I would like to welcome Councillor Howard Williams to his first meeting of the Council and I look forward to working with him. This is therefore the first Council meeting at which I can pay tribute to and thank former Councillor Sara Fearn for her service, including as a member of the Cabinet. I am sure Council would wish to join me in wishing her well on her relocation to Devon. I was pleased to appoint Councillor Chris Rogers to the Cabinet and, as members will know, I have made some adjustments to portfolios as a consequence.

Following the decision at the Council meeting in February to agree changes to electoral arrangements for Stourport-on-Severn Town Council, I am pleased to report that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England gave its consent. The order to implement the changes was made on 1 May 2017 and will come into effect for the next ordinary elections for the Town Council in 2019.

I am sure colleagues will have been delighted to read of the Young Persons Safety Award in the Suzy Lamplugh National Personal Safety Awards 2017 won by Safer Wyre Forest and The ContinU Trust for the Community Ambassador Project. It is very pleasing to see the good work that the Council's staff do recognised in this way, and their achievement also reflects well on the Council. I am sure Council will wish to extend its congratulations to Community Safety and Partnerships Officer Kathryn Underhill and project lead Jeanette Lane.

I would like to thank those members who made themselves available for interviews and discussion as part of the Local Government Association's peer review in March. Members were given initial feedback at the Members' Forum on 9 March and the Chief Executive circulated a copy of the full written report in mid April. It reflects many positive things about the Council and all members can be proud about that. There are a number of recommendations for us to consider about the future and suggestions for development as we prepare our next medium term financial strategy later in the year. The Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team will be considering the recommendations at a meeting next month, and obviously we will involve the chairman and members of the Overview and Scrutiny committee in respect of the recommendation that relates to that committee.

There is an item on tonight's agenda about senior management structure. I am pleased to report that, before the next meeting of Council, two important managerial posts will be filled. Rupert Detheridge will join us as Property and Investment Manager, a post which will play a central role in implementing the capital portfolio fund that Council agreed in February. He has a strong background in private sector property joining us from Lambert Smith Hampton in Birmingham and having previously worked at Bruton Knowles. Helen Ogram will take up her role as Financial Services Manager and deputy Section 151 officer after she has finished her current role at South Staffordshire District Council, where she has been Section 151 officer and therefore joins us with very considerable senior experience in local government finance. It is good that the Council is seen as an attractive employer for senior roles such as these.

Finally, I would like to thank the elections staff for all of their hard work in the local elections last week. Mike Saunders, who has only been with us for a short while did a very good job and our new venue seemed to work well.

Cllr Marcus Hart
Leader of the Council.