

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2017

Scaffolding policy

I am pleased to say that work has started on the scaffolding policy requested by Councillor Nicholson at the January meeting of Full Council. Initial actions include reviewing policies used by other councils including that of Hampshire which was mentioned in his motion as being particularly effective.

Dark skies Initiative

Work has recently been restarted on the dark skies initiative. This would see the Island working towards international designation for the quality of its night skies and concerns the reduction in avoidable light pollution. This initiative is a partnership including a number of interested groups and the Isle of Wight Council. It has a clear benefit for the wellbeing of residents and also to tourism. The council for its part is looking for ways to support the initiative through the planning system. To this end we are reviewing what actions have been taken in areas where this designation has already been achieved with the aim of doing similar here.

Accord group

Along with officers I held a very interesting first meeting with the Accord Group. They are a mixed social and affordable housing association from the Midlands who are also involved with the design and local manufacturing of panelised house construction. We are now investigating if there is the possibility of working with them on future projects particularly in the areas of new housing, job creation and overall regeneration.

The Bus Shelter

The Bus Shelter project needs to find a new location. The current site at Seaclose was only ever a temporary solution and with the onset of summer and subsequent activity at the park increasing something needs to happen. While it is not the responsibility of the Isle of Wight Council to find the bus a home, we are supportive of the project and want to help them. I would ask anyone with suggestions or offers of space to please contact me.

Syrian refugee situation

Firstly may I restate that this administration was never going back on the agreement the previous administration signed up to. In my view integrity is vital to the name of the Isle of Wight Council and I would never go back on our word. I am focused now on the

proper implementation of the policy so I am working to get every safeguard in place to avoid negative impacts.

My party was the first to call for refugees to be taken directly from the Turkish camps and that is what we are doing. As part of this I have received the guarantees I asked for regarding the nature of the refugees we are to home and I am also now comfortable with the funding we are getting from government and the level of risk involved.

I am pleased to announce that the first property has been signed up and that the first family should arrive shortly. For the sake of privacy there will be no specific announcements about who the families are, their locations or when they will arrive. A support officer for the programme funded by the government has been advertised for and interviews are imminent.

Councillor Daryll Pitcher
Executive Member For Planning, Housing and Homelessness