

**REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR TOURISM AND
BUSINESS DEVELOPEMENT (INCLUDING PUBLIC REALM)
TO THE MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL
ON WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH 2017**

As a small business owner myself, I have been delighted to use the opportunity offered by my new portfolio to help identify and address the challenges businesses of all types face in developing Island prosperity and the wide range of opportunities that exist for growing our local economy.

I attended a presentation on the redevelopment of Norris Castle as the Island's first five star hotel and was excited to hear about the prospect of new jobs for Island residents and the opportunity the development potentially presents to help repair and reinstate the historic sea wall and coastal footpath.

I also attended a Visit Isle of Wight marketing meeting at the Garlic Farm where I tabled a proposal about sighting webcams around the Island's key beauty spots to provide 24 hour access for social media users around the world to view. This has come closer to a reality as Wight Fibre has agreed to fund and install the first six cameras that will help improve our footprint and put us on the world wide web as a visitor destination.

I've also been working on bringing forward the Sandham Gardens tourism project. Myself and fellow Executive members have had meetings with the developer and Sandown and Isle of Wight Council representatives, who are all anxious to be working together to bring this key Bay project forward that will hopefully kick-start the regeneration of Sandown seafront.

I attended the tourism conference at Norton Grange on 7 March. It was well attended with several interesting speakers who gave their views and individual stories and advice relating to their sectors. I took great confidence from the enthusiasm and 'can do' attitude that ran throughout the day and that we are in a good place regarding our tourism offer and the key issues that will make things even better.

I am pleased the Newport Harbour revision order is being actioned by the Executive. This will be the first step towards a brighter future for our historic harbour that can one day be the jewel of Newport and the Island if all involved can work together to create a shared plan and vision.

I was pleased to hear the feedback from the leader's business reference meeting held recently and the appetite expressed by all attending to work more constructively with the council on a range of issues. These include selling the Island as a place to live and to do business and working with schools and colleges to offer opportunities to young people to learn more about the world of work and the fantastic range of careers that can be followed here.

I have been working with officers to ensure the community are kept informed of works to install a new bridge link at the cliff lift at Shanklin.

Councillor Wayne Whittle

Executive Member for Tourism and Business Development (including Public Realm)