

Purpose: For Information



## **FULL COUNCIL**

Date **21 NOVEMBER 2018**

Title: **LEADER'S UPDATE**

Report of **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

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### **Introduction**

1. The most important piece of work undertaken since my last report to Full Council has been the preparation of the Administration's first draft proposal for setting a lawful and balanced budget in 2019/20; which was approved by Cabinet on 8 November. This is an 'options paper' at this stage intended to encourage wide discussion and understanding about the financial challenges the council faces.
2. I believe this is the earliest any Administration has published its thinking for many years and I hope that people recognise the opportunity they now have to comment on these proposals over a ten week period. This is completely different to previous approaches that have seen budget recommendations set out at the beginning of February for Full Council's approval later that month.
3. Saving £16.5m over the next three years, starting with £5.5m next year is a challenge; this comes on top of the £76m we have already saved since 2011/12. Nobody becomes a local councillor to cut budgets, we all want to invest in our communities and see them grow and flourish, but we have to be realistic about our position and work smarter and harder with the money we have.
4. As an Administration we have been realistic about what we are trying to achieve and we have a crystal clear focus on being a financial and sustainable council for the long term. Government will not bail us out, but if we are responsible in the decisions we take about the budget it may listen to our arguments for our unique Island case as part of its fair funding review.
5. Publishing our budget proposals early, has given the whole Island a chance to consider their impact, make representations to us and suggest alternatives; we will listen to anyone who makes constructive alternative suggestions to these

proposals, before we make our final recommendations to Full Council in February 2019.

### **Leader & Strategic Partnerships**

6. A newly formed 'Executive Board' to steer the development of our One Public Service agenda met in October and has identified a number of areas for increasing collaboration across the sector. The County Hall one stop shop with voluntary sector partners is progressing well and is expected to be open to the public on 19 November.
7. Cabinet meetings in September and October were held in Ventnor and Ryde respectively and were very well attended. It is important that the Cabinet is accessible to all of our community and I am pleased with the support we have received so far. Just as importantly it has given the opportunity for the Cabinet to meet with the local town and parish councils and grow its understanding of the issues they face and how we can work more closely together for the benefit of the whole community. The initiative has been very well received by our town and parish council colleagues and I am looking forward to further productive meetings in the West Wight and Sandown Bay in the coming months.

### **Adult Social Care, Public Health and Housing Needs**

8. The Adult Social Care directorate has been shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle awards 2018 for its work to improve people's lives as part of its Care Close to Home strategy. The winner will be announced at a prestigious award ceremony on the 19 March. Councillor Mosdell was one of five shortlisted by the Local Government Information Unit's Councillor Achievement Awards 2018 for Health and Care.
9. Councillor Mosdell attended a meeting in October to discuss the issue of cross Solent patient travel with Steven Barclay, Minister of State for Health the Island's MP, Bob Seely, and colleagues from the health services. I understand that it was a positive meeting with a good airing of the relevant issues. Although the health service provides means tested support for some patients, the council has been providing additional help to NHS patients with specific illnesses since 2006. Given the pressure to fund our legal responsibilities the council is consulting on its future options for this fund.
10. The Public Health team has secured a new provider to deliver alcohol and substance misuse services for residents of the Isle of Wight. The provider, Inclusion, is a specialist NHS drug and alcohol service provider and has experience delivering these specialist services in many areas across the country, including HMP IOW. It will take responsibility for delivering the contract from 1st December 2018.

## **Children's Services**

11. The council's early help team is currently recruiting a range of volunteers to help provide support to Island children and families in addition to our statutory functions. Opportunities are available in a range of areas, from mentoring young people leaving care to delivering outreach support to families in their homes. This is an innovative programme for extending the range of support we can offer to children and young people and their families across the Island.

## **Regeneration and Business Development**

12. The process to bring forward the regeneration of Newport Harbour has taken a major step forward with the appointment of a 'masterplan development team' led by award winning architecture firm Kay Elliott. Their specific proposals that balance the attraction of market interest, retaining harbour heritage & character and enhancing Newport as whole will be received in Spring 2019.
13. A proposal to consider the wider regeneration of Newport as part of the Government's Garden Communities programme was also submitted this month, centred on the regeneration of brownfield sites, supporting infrastructure, sustainable transport and highest quality design of new housing.
14. The second Isle of Wight digital conference will take place on 15 November. It brings together a wide range of Island, national and international businesses to identify and grow the digital opportunities for the Island. Central to this year's event is a digital frenzy hosted by Barclays Eagle Labs; IBM will also demonstrate its Watson health applications.

## **Infrastructure and Transport**

15. Island Roads are in the process of completing the resurfacing of almost twelve miles of carriageway along the Military Road in a planned approach that has minimised local impact and secured this iconic drive for our future visitors to the Island. This is a major road improvement which users should enjoy and respect.

## **Planning and Housing**

16. The delivery of more affordable homes for Island people is a key element of our corporate plan. Following the decision of Cabinet in November we are now taking the necessary steps to establish the special purpose vehicles (SPVs) needed for the council to take a lead in delivering more homes. At the same time we are preparing for the creation of a housing delivery company to help us to build more effectively.

17. The Island Plan will be published for consultation at the end of November. This plan is central to achieving our economic and housing aspirations and I hope that people will find the time to contribute to its development by responding to the consultation.

### **Environment and Heritage**

18. Three expressions of interest (EOIs) in the operation and management of Dinosaur Isle have been received and are currently subject to a formal review process. A key aspiration for the council is to secure investment into the facility, protect the museum's invaluable collection, maintain the museum's formal accreditation and support our aspirations for the regeneration of Sandown Bay. A further competitive process will follow analysis of the EOIs.
19. Councillors Hobart and Abraham will be attending a meeting with Julian Glover, facilitated by the Island's MP, Bob Seely, to discuss his review into England's designated landscapes – National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and its possible implications for the Isle of Wight.

### **Community Safety and Public Protection**

20. The consultation period about the proposals to create a combined fire service across Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight closed at the end of October. The analysis of the data collected through the process is now underway and will inform final recommendations in the New Year.

### **Corporate Resources**

21. The council has re-applied to be part of the Business Rate Retention Pilot process for 2019/20 (now offered on a 75% Retention basis as opposed to the 100% basis) prior to the launch of the national scheme in 2020/21. Based on current estimates, the benefit of the 100% scheme provided a direct allocation of £1.8m to the Council and a share of a "growth and productivity pot" for capital investment of a further £4.0m
22. The Administration continues to closely monitor the delivery of the council's budget for 2018/19 which is in accordance with planned spending, including the £7.5m of savings approved in February 2018.
23. In the each of the last three months I am pleased to say that the contact centre has managed an average call answer time of just 60 seconds; this reflects our initial commitment to improve this performance and also the hard work of the staff to make this difference to our community.

24. Following the recent senior management restructure I can confirm that conditional appointments have been made to the positions of Director of Neighbourhoods, Strategic Manager for Highways and Transportation and Strategic Manager for Planning and infrastructure; all appointees are expected to start in the New Year. Two new graduate recruits have also been appointed and will start work with the council at the end of November.
25. The council has been shortlisted for one of the Chamber of Commerce's Business Awards for the work it has done in the recruitment of apprentices which has seen it meet and exceed its required numbers under the apprenticeship levy scheme.

### **Procurement, Waste Management, Special Projects and Forward Planning**

26. It was pleasing to note in a recent BBC report that the Isle of Wight Council and its partner Amey are among only a handful of UK authorities that recycle most types of plastics collected from the household. Since February 2016, Island residents have recycled nearly 4,100 tonnes of plastic collected from homes. This has helped the Island recycle a total of 55 per cent of all household waste in the 2017/18 financial year.
27. I would also remind members that the residents' recycling and waste online survey is now open and will run until Friday 4 January 2019. This is an opportunity for householders to put forward suggestions for future improvements or ideas on how the Island can recycle more and reduce our waste.

### **Concluding Remarks**

28. Once again, I am able to report a full and active level of progress being overseen by the conservative led administration. As leader, I am reassured that the council remains on track to deliver against its Corporate Plan objectives.

DAVE STEWART

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