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Purpose: For Information

Committee report

Committee	FULL COUNCIL
Date	15 JANUARY 2020
Title:	LEADER'S UPDATE
Report of	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Introduction

1. I am very grateful for the work of all the council's officers led by Deputy Returning Officer, in the professional and well organised delivery of both the General Election for the Isle of Wight Parliamentary Constituency and our own local election for the Newport West ward.
2. I recognise that such an event involves a great many of our council staff, which is most noticeable at the election count. They and colleagues not involved with the election must all continue with their daily roles at the same time as undertaking this extra work. So my thanks to everyone for their input however small.
3. My congratulations to Councillor Richard Hollis on his re-election to the council as member for Newport West. I know that he will add invaluable experience and knowledge to the work of the council. I am also sure that he will continue with the first class representation of the constituents of his ward started by his predecessor Councillor Whitehouse.

Leader & Strategic Partnerships

4. Following the outcome of the General Election in December I can confirm I wrote to the Prime Minister to congratulate him on his re-election and to remind him that he had spoken with some authority about Isle of Wight's unique position and its challenges when compared with other upper tier authorities. I invited him to progress an 'Island Deal' between government and the Isle of Wight, with the continued support of our Island MP, ensuring the Island has sufficient funding for residents to access public services in the same way as in the rest of the country.

5. At the start of the New Year I wrote again to the Prime Minister and to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to offer my support for the government's reported initiative to amend the public spending rules. The proposal to include wider criteria for determining the allocation of public spending than the application of the Treasury's Green Book will I believe allow the removal of barriers that have restricted the Island's access to significant investment funds over many years.
6. I have also written to the Minister for State for Housing, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury about other key issues of importance to the Island including the future of the Camp Hill prison estate, our vision of one public service and the future delivery of housing for Island residents.

Adult Social Care, Public Health and Housing Needs

7. Members will be aware about concerns of 'winter pressures' impacting on the NHS and its ability to deliver the best possible services for those most in need of care, especially urgent and emergency care. I am grateful to all of the council's staff in social services (especially those in adult social care) who spent a significant amount of time over the Christmas period supporting St Mary's Hospital to help people leave the hospital as quickly as possible but with the right packages of care to meet their specific needs.
8. The challenge of winter pressures can often be the source of tension between local authorities and the NHS but I hope the joint plans that have been developed on the Island over many months will serve our community well.
9. Members may be interested to know that in the week before Christmas delayed transfers of care (DToC) from our hospital attributable to adult social care was 2.2 per 100,000 population against a target figure of 2.6.
10. Members may wish to know that in the week before Christmas not a single family was living in bed and breakfast accommodation on the Island. This is very unusual for any local authority and is testament to the work Councillor Mosdell who with our Director of Adult Social Services has transformed the council's approach to working with our homeless community.

Children's Services

11. I am also grateful for the watchful oversight of Councillor Paul Brading to the decisions being made in respect of the surplus primary school places in the West Wight. I understand the sensitivities that accompany any potential decision to implement a school closure and also the strong affinities between a community and a school. For these reasons the council has taken the time to listen and respond to the needs of the local community and seek the support, where possible, of the governing bodies of the affected schools.
12. I recognise that the council must take a long term strategic view of the educational needs of West Wight children to ensure they have the best possible

opportunity to realise their full potential. This must and will continue to be at the heart of decisions we take about the distribution of school places in a locality. Schools will thrive best if buildings are of good quality, are full and can attract the best teachers through the provision of an exciting mix of challenges and opportunities.

Regeneration and Business Development

13. I am particularly pleased that the Isle of Wight has been offered the opportunity to host the final stage of the Tour of Britain in September 2021. This recognises the huge potential of the Isle of Wight as a venue for events of international importance and affords an opportunity for Island Businesses to secure economic benefit from the event itself and also from legacy activities that tend to accompany events of this nature.
14. The details of the event itself can all be found in the report to Cabinet in January. Events of this nature are rarely secured without the input of the local authority acting for the good of the community as a whole and often needing to take some calculated decisions that are not part of the routine local authorities are accustomed to. Ultimately Full Council will need to consider its support for the event on behalf of the Island, when we set the council's budget in February.

Infrastructure and Transport

15. I am pleased to report that the road works at St Mary's Roundabout continue to be on programme and the removal of some of the roadworks over the Christmas period was well received by the local community. I would also wish to thank the various providers for their voluntary contribution of Christmas Trees. Works on the scheme recommenced on Monday 6 January.

Planning and Housing

16. Following publication of the draft Island Planning Strategy consultation there was and indeed continues to be significant concern expressed about the number of potential homes planned for the Island generated from the application of the national standard methodology of calculating housing numbers, which the government has set out for all local authorities. Councillor Abraham is leading on a piece of work we are undertaking to prepare an evidence-based case to challenge the current numbers and that demonstrates the real housing needs of the Island.
17. On the 6th January the council also launched a local needs housing survey to further inform the evidence base needed to confirm housing needs of the Island's community. The survey is aimed at all households and will help us to better understand the number and type of homes that are needed and the affordability issues for local people. This survey is being supplemented by a statistically robust telephone survey.
18. I hope that we can encourage every household across the Island to complete the online survey (paper copies also available) and I would ask for the support

of all Members in encouraging your local residents to participate. The survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/IWHousingNeeds2020>

19. In addition, the council will also be looking to seek the views of each town and parish council about their understanding of the needs of their individual local communities and to plan for them in a revised Island Planning Strategy.
20. A revised consultation draft Island Planning Strategy is scheduled again for consultation in Spring 2020, with a view to being submitted to government for inspection in February 2021.
21. One of the council's core outcomes is for 'people have a place to call home and can live with independence'. There were over 2,500 households on the council's housing register at the end of September 2019 (see the Q2 performance data reported to Cabinet on 9 January), indicating that the provision of sufficient and appropriate housing remains a key priority for the community and for the council.

Corporate Resources

22. As I alluded to in my report to November's Full Council meeting, the General Election unfortunately delayed the publication of the Local Government Financial Settlement, which was published on 20 December.
23. As expected, there were no changes to the initial proposals made by the Chancellor in September and the headline messages are:
 - a. Revenue Support Grant and Baseline Funding Levels are uplifted based on the increase in the small business rate multiplier (1.6%).
 - b. Maximum permitted increase in council tax is 2% for the "core" Band D and a further optional 2% for the Adult Social Care Precept.
 - c. A new £1bn social care grant. Other grants remain the same, although Winter Pressures grant is now rolled into the Improved Better Care Fund (and its 'ring fence' removed).
 - d. This is the final full year of New Homes Bonus: there is one new additional year added on in 2020-21, but it will not attract any rewards in future years. It is likely that NHB will have disappeared entirely by 2023-24.
24. The indications are that the overall settlement will help the council to absorb some of the financial risks that have emerged over the last financial year, most especially from an increase in demand for social care (children's and adults). So it is unlikely that the council's current savings target of £4.5m for the next financial year (2020/21) will change.
25. Being a financially balanced and sustainable organisation remains the council's primary objective and greatest challenge. The impact of the settlement will be

factored into the Cabinet's budget proposals for 2020/21 which it will consider on 13 February before making its recommendations to Full Council on 26 February.

Procurement, Waste Management, Special Projects and Forward Planning

26. May I remind Members that the annual residents' recycling and waste survey is now open; it provides an opportunity for householders to put forward suggestions for future improvements or ideas on how the Island can reduce its waste and recycle more. Recycling will continue to be a key theme for the council throughout the new decade as a contribution to our wider plans to respond to the declaration of a climate emergency.
27. Online feedback can be given at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RecyclingWasteSatisfactionSurvey2019> or paper versions are available from County Hall reception area, libraries and council help centres.

Community Safety and Digital Transformation

28. Finally, I welcome the appointment of Councillor Gary Peace to the cabinet team and his new responsibilities will include Digital Transformation, a key element of a modern council's service provision. Details of all cabinet responsibilities will follow.

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