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Purpose: For Information

Committee	FULL COUNCIL
Date	26 FEBRUARY 2019
Title:	LEADER'S UPDATE
Report of	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Introduction

1. In the month since my last report a significant amount of time has been spent finalising the proposals for the 2020/21 budget that are a part of today's agenda. Therefore, I will not dwell too much on budget issues in this report other than to remind members that being a financially balanced and sustainable council remains our number one objective as an administration and I believe as a council. A sound financial base provides us with the opportunity to focus on the delivery of the best possible services we can provide for our community, built around its needs. This has been a key driver in developing the budget proposals members will consider at today's meeting.

Leader & Strategic Partnerships

2. As I reported to the previous meeting; with the continued support of the Island's MP, I am in correspondence with the Prime Minister and other Ministers about progressing an 'Island Deal' between government and the Isle of Wight, so that the Island has sufficient funding for its residents to access public services in the same way as in the rest of the country.
3. The recent Cabinet reshuffle has slightly impeded the chain of correspondence with some key individuals. I am sure it will be helpful that I was already in correspondence with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury before his promotion to Chancellor; in one of his previous roles I also had the pleasure with colleagues from the University of Portsmouth of presenting to him the outcomes of their study into the additional costs of providing public services on an Island (the unique Island case). I am sure that this meeting and the report influenced the consideration of 'island status' as an additional criteria for determining the funding of a local authority, as set out in the fair funding review.

4. Members will be interested to hear that the continued excellent work of the council and its partners has been recognised by the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (IESE), a local authority owned and led national transformation partner. The Living Well Service, transforming travel project and Isle of Wight Against Scams Partnership (IWASP) have all been shortlisted for awards by IESE. Congratulations to all the staff and partners working in these areas for this well deserved external recognition of the impact of their work on the daily lives of the Island's community.
5. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Combined Fire and Rescue Authority (CFA), combination order has been drafted by the Home Office and is awaiting final sign off from Ministers. The successful strategic partnership with Hampshire FRA (known as DDiP – Delivering Differently in Partnership) will continue until the new Combined Fire Authority comes into being in April 2021. The risk management plan (also on today's agenda for Council's agreement) will be a key document for creating the framework around which the delivery of fire and rescue services is organised across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
6. The second round of fire service inspections undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) are scheduled to begin this spring. I have been advised that the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service will be inspected at the end of April. Preliminary meetings have already been held with the lead inspector and a 'discovery' visit is planned for mid March. The previous inspection found the service was good at being effective and efficient in keeping people safe from fire and other risks but needed to improve how it looks after 'its people'. I know that a great deal of work has been undertaken by the service to deliver the actions needed following the last inspection and I look forward to a positive outcome.

Adult Social Care, Public Health and Housing Needs

7. I recently attended a feedback session following an advisory visit from the Local Government Association's Care and Health Improvement Programme, looking at the work of adult social care services in supporting discharges from the hospital. It was pleasing to hear the advisors were very impressed with what they had observed and that the council was doing all it could, and more, to help people transition from hospital to home or appropriate care setting in the best possible way.
8. The council commissioned "Raising Standards Initiative", aims to improve the quality of registered care on the Island. It was developed in partnership with health colleagues and the independent care sector and is now in its third year. So far, the programme has been accessed by 79 registered services of which 38 have since been re-inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and 92% have seen an improvement in their inspection rating. Of those providers who have attended the programme, 87% are now rated good or better by the CQC. This initiative is therefore making a real impact on the quality of care provision for the Island's community.
9. The Director of Public Health continues to lead the Island's preparations for any cases of the Coronavirus (now called Covid19) that may occur locally. He is

linked into the Government's Chief Medical Officer's regular briefings and will advise as and when we need to do anything more specific in response. At the time of writing the Chief Medical Officer continues to advise the risk to the public is moderate, with risks to individuals remaining low. The council has published a link on its website to guidance notes from NHS England for people who have any concerns. In the meantime the basic principles of good hygiene, will serve us and our community well in helping to avoid the transmission of germs of any nature

Children's Services, Education and Skills

10. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) recently inspected the Special Education Need or Disabilities (SEND) services provided by the council and health partners. It concluded that there has been marked improvements for SEND pupils; with senior leaders from education, health and care working well together. This is a further reflection of the very many professional and committed people we have supporting the most vulnerable young people in our community.

The inspection team found:

- Families with a baby with a lifelong disability are supported well.
- A good speech and language therapy service is available
- Young people with SEND have good access to emotional and mental health services.
- Most children with SEND feel happy and are making progress.
- Most parents are happy with the support their child receives in school.
- Outcomes for older young people are strong while the outcomes of children and young people with SEND are improving.
- Pupils with SEND have good attendance at school.

There were some areas identified for improvement largely around developing communication so that parents are aware of the positive changes achieved and can help shape further developments. These improvements are already being implemented.

11. I am pleased to report that two implementation groups have now been established to oversee the closure of All Saints' All Saints' Primary School, Freshwater and the subsequent relocation of Yarmouth Primary School to the vacant Freshwater. This follows decisions taken in January by the Cabinet and the governing body of the Federation of Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth. The groups met for the first time on 28 January and will meet monthly to ensure continued progress on all fronts.

Regeneration and Business Development

12. The much-anticipated regeneration proposals for Newport Harbour will be published by the end of February. They reflect the ambition this administration has for Newport and the Island as whole. Based on nearly two years of consultation with local communities, businesses and harbour users they contain exciting proposals for a new landmark cultural venue on the harbourside and a new cycle/pedestrian footbridge linking the two sides of the river Medina.

13. Taking full account of the area's heritage and current use as a working and leisure harbour the proposed future uses will create new, affordable homes, new jobs and higher education opportunities in refurbished harbourside buildings and new hotel accommodation to serve our ever-increasing visitor base. Crucially, the links to Newport town centre will be secured, expanding its appeal with a new harbourside quarter.
14. Using the same model as in Newport the council is working closely with Ryde Town council, Ryde Business Association and community groups to develop a Ryde Place Plan. Based on local consultations, latest data and an assessment of current and future regeneration proposals the plan will represent a new era for local collaboration in realising the full potential of the town. The unique coastal wildlife and historic character Ryde's place as a key part of the Island Biosphere and a Heritage High St action zone will present early opportunities to generate a new life in the town and tackle some of its social concerns.

Infrastructure and Transport

15. I must commend the actions of council staff and its contractor Island Roads in acting swiftly and decisively to secure the site of a failed retaining wall at Belgrave Road in Ventnor. All residents and businesses who were immediately impacted by the failure have been returned to their homes and a permanent solution to the failure is being developed.
16. Work continues on processing requests for Resident Parking Schemes across the island; to date 101 roads have been subject to requests. Of these, 38 have now been surveyed for parking stress; 30 met the criteria and moved to resident consultation and voting and five have been subject to favourable residents' consultation for implementation.
17. The contract for removal of the vehicles owned by persistent evaders of parking fines commenced early August 2019; since this time 24 vehicles have been removed and of this total 6 have now been disposed of as they were not claimed within the statutory period. The policy and removal contract has proved to be a good deterrent and has resulted in a number of persistent evaders contacting the council prior to further Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) being issued and requesting payment plans for outstanding PCNs.

Planning and Housing

18. This administration prides itself on consulting with and listening to the Island community. The need for an informed debate about the Island's future housing needs will be assisted by the results of an Island wide survey which has just closed and on the views of the recently published draft housing strategy. Over 1500 people responded to the housing needs survey and the comments received in connection from the consultation will help shape the council's approach to making sure there are sufficient affordable housing choices for our key workers, growing families and vulnerable groups.
19. The survey results will be considered alongside the feedback on the draft Island plan to help revise the proposals for future land use to ensure sustainable

communities with the right supporting infrastructure. This survey is being supplemented by a statistically robust telephone survey. In addition, I will be writing to the Island's community to provide me with individual case studies of the challenges caused by the lack of sufficient and appropriate housing which I can then use in presenting the Island's case to government ministers.

Environment and Heritage

20. The first draft of the council's aspirational strategy to reach net-carbon zero by 2030 has been reviewed by the policy/scrutiny committee for neighbourhoods and regeneration. The strategy will be revised and updated to be ratified by the Cabinet in spring of this year and identifies an exciting pathway to reduce carbon, support the community in positive environmental change and set out the roadmap for an energised Island.
21. The total number of One Cards, for use at the council's leisure centres was 7,470 at the end of December 2019; this represents growth of 4.8% on the same period last year. This reflects the success of sales and marketing promotions and the investment in both the Heights and Medina Tone Zone leisure centres and gyms; over the last five years memberships have grown by 50%. As part of ongoing sales and promotional activities a new interactive website has been launched to further increase awareness and participation. <https://1leisure.co.uk/>

Community Safety and Digital Transformation

22. The council's website re-design project is well underway having completed the required discovery phase work to review usage, demographics content as well as establishing a customer centred service design approach and undertaking consultation on new homepage layouts. The next phase of work in preparation for the launch of new website content in September 2020 has begun with services that have the highest website traffic. At the heart of the re-design is a 'mobile first' approach that will afford 'app-like' functionality with content and services designed around customer needs and using the nationally recognised Gov Digital design principles.
23. Tackling digital poverty remains a vital element of this work and the redesign will take into account the needs of our residents and accessibility standards. There will be continued access to computers with on-hand help and assistance for free in council help centres and libraries and free wi-fi for guest users in these locations as well as leisure centres. The local full fibre network project being run by the regeneration team is also giving superfast broadband access in rural areas.

Corporate Resources

24. The council's staff appreciation awards recognise and celebrate the significant achievements of our staff over the year. The ceremony was held on 31 January. There were some 178 nominations for awards, across nine categories, a record number of nominations. It was somewhat challenging to select just one winner, highly commended and commended for each of the award categories. This event is a real highlight in the annual calendar and is opportunity to pay tribute to

the hard work, contributions and successes that staff make in delivering services for our communities.

Procurement, Waste Management, Special Projects and Forward Planning

25. The Isle of Wight is now proud to be near the top 10 per cent of local authority recyclers moving up to 36th of 354 local authorities. This is a fantastic achievement for the Island and shows that we can lead the way.

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COUNCILLOR DAVE STEWART

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