

Full Council – 15 July 2020

Written question from Jonathan Bacon to the Leader, Isle of Wight Council

I am pleased that the Council has acknowledged the status and importance of the Isle of Wight as a UNESCO Biosphere in the recently published Visitor Charter. As stated in the press release about the Charter, our status as a Biosphere is an essential part of the Island's offer to visitors. I would like to ask what further recognition and support of Biosphere status the Council will consider and promote in order to support our environment and the contribution it makes into the Island's economy, including support for the maintenance and development of the status and its use in respect of planning policy.

Response

The Administration recognises the importance of the UNESCO Biosphere to the Isle of Wight. The Biosphere principles will continue to influence our plans and strategies as we move forward, and our commitment to such principles will come to the fore in our emerging Climate and Environment Strategy. The council welcomes and encourages the AONB team to work closely with our officers to develop a collaborative approach for developing and enhancing the Biosphere in our economic, planning and environmental strategies.

Even though the Biosphere has no formal weight in the planning process, it is awarded when areas can demonstrate that people and the natural environment are coexisting harmoniously, so I see this as recognition of the approach that we are taking towards sustainable development and I will want to see that continue in our Island Planning Strategy as we move forward. I know the Administration will want to work with a range of partners to ensure that the Biosphere status is successfully promoted so it plays an important role in our vision for the Island.