

Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Policy Scrutiny committee – 1st October 2020

Cabinet member update – Regeneration

Service overview

The Regeneration directorate within the council, under the leadership of the Director for Regeneration, comprises the Regeneration team, Planning services, the Corporate Property and Economic development teams.

The directorate was formed as a result of a key proposal in the councils medium term financial strategy, to develop capacity, to maximise potential returns on councils assets and help grow the local economy. Since their appointment the regeneration team has focused on developing key projects towards identifying the necessary resources and methods of delivery, whilst at the same time developing a holistic regeneration strategy for the Island.

In July 2017 a major conference to launch the regeneration programme was held, where over 130 stakeholders interested in collaborating with the council to achieve successful regeneration gathered, to explore how the proposed projects and key issues such as economic development , housing and tourism might be taken forward. The team also launched an Island conversation through promoting an on line survey “The Wight We Want”, to secure the views of Islanders on the type of island they want to see for future generations.

The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the islands population, and in particular its economy, is still being felt, highlighting the continuing need for progressing the regeneration programme as part of an overall Covid -19 recovery plan “A Better Island” agreed by cabinet in September 2020

The key developments in terms of recent and current activities of the regeneration directorate that are relevant to the interests of this committee are listed below:

Area profiles and regeneration plans –

Heritage High St Action Zone funding -£1m of government funding for Ryde and Newport High sts secured to maximise their heritage value was recently confirmed by government. The bids were developed in partnership and the Isle of Wight was the only council to secure two successful projects. Improving public realm, shopfronts , housing and diversifying uses of the high st are the main activities planned over the next 4 years

A place plan for Newport is now in its second year of implementation , developed in conjunction with Newport Business association and Newport Parish council, following extensive consultation it sets out 15 key actions for regeneration of the town to feed into the Island regeneration strategy

Ryde Place Plan – agreed in Feb 2020 this sets out the key priorities for sustainable regeneration in Ryde developed in partnership with the town council , the business association and community groups

Cowes and Northwood Place Plan – reactivated consultation following easing of lockdown restrictions will result in a place plan for this part of the island before the end of 2020

East Cowes Town Plan – led by the town council community consultations identify key areas of concern with the aim of developing collaborative solutions

BAE Ascensos contact centre/ Innovation Centre – the cabinet , as its first decision in May 2017 agreed a package of support to bring up to 600 contact centre jobs to the Isle of Wight. Ascensos, a leading outsource customer service provider, with blue chip clients such as B&Q and Argos decided to set up their first U.K. presence outside Scotland on the island , drawn by the prospect of a loyal, skilled workforce and a package of support including the provision of suitable premises and help with recruitment.

Feedback from the company indicates they have been delighted with the quality of support they have received and the staff they have recruited so far . Their current and future space requirements reflect the need for greater social distancing as indicated by government guidance

The project also provides flexible space for the potential future relocation of council services, the provision of shared functions with other parts of the public sector and a potential business incubation facility – subject to funding being confirmed the first phase of these uses is scheduled for Spring 2021.

Newport Harbour – consultation on the proposed masterplan for Newport harbour highlighted to two main issues.

1. The Environment Agency requested further, more detailed flood risk modelling be undertaken prior to the adoption of the masterplan as a supplementary planning document
2. Community concern regarding proposed allocation of the land at Fairlee Rd, termed “Seaclose Gate” for housing

Both of these issues are being addressed prior to consideration of the masterplan by the councils cabinet.

The request to the MMO for the issue of a Harbour Revision order is about to begin its parliamentary consideration to be taken forward by the relevant government department.

Marketing and promoting the development – post covid - will require each of these issues to be resolved if an attractive, de-risked development offer, that meets community expectations is to attract interest from the development market.

Nicholson Rd – Following preparation and submission of a Phase 1 detailed application and outline application for further phases, planning committee approved the Nicholson Rd business park on 22/9/20 subject to conditions linked to road infrastructure

A strategic Ryde East junctions study is due to report in October 2020 helping inform the phasing, costing and potential financing of key road improvements in this area.

Bids to government to support funding of improved infrastructure can now progress along with a full business case for the phased development of the employment units. In the interim, temporary community use of the green space at the site during any lockdown scenarios has been facilitated.

Venture Quays and the wider Medina Valley – the council acquired the sites known as Venture Quays in East Cowes on 28/8/20 to help protect marine manufacturing employment at the site. The other sites and buildings offer scope for commercial leisure and housing development as part of a much needed refresh of the waterfront masterplan for East Cowes, working closely with the town council and their emerging town plan. The regeneration team have also been identifying the funding

and investment model that would enable the council to construct the necessary buildings in the Medina Valley to accommodate new and existing Marine businesses operating in this vitally significant sector of the Islands economy. The timescales involved in securing the necessary environmental permissions for the Kingston site have required consideration of other additional potential waterfront sites including the marine employment zone as part of the Medina Yard mixed use development. Officers continue to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure appropriate accommodation for boatbuilding is made available within the necessary timescales.

Dinosaur Isle and the wider bay – A process of “competitive dialogue” is underway to identify a potential investment partner for Dinosaur Isle. Discussions with other land owners in the Eastern Bay area are exploring the potential for a shared vision for the area.

Camp Hill – discussions with MOJ officials scheduled in the next quarter to identify options to bring this site forward for development

Transport and Infrastructure

As part of the development of a new Island Plan an updated transport strategy is being commissioned following on from the report of the transport and infrastructure task force and a LEP funded Island infrastructure plan. The Transport Infrastructure Board continues to co-ordinate the planning and improvements of transport services to and from the island.

A programme of improvements for Island line, including provision of new rolling stock are scheduled to commence in Winter 2020

Digital Infrastructure – the accelerated commercial roll out of full fibre continues as is scheduled to be completed in 2023

Housing

New partnership based Island housing strategy to be considered by cabinet October 2020 .

The executive is reviewing its partnership delivery arrangements to adopt a project by project approach to working with partners to deliver affordable housing.

A model for small to medium sized developments with supporting infrastructure eg employment units on council land as proposed at Branstone Farm is helping inform consideration of other sites. The council was successful in securing £2.25m from the government Getting Building fund for the Branstone Farm scheme.