



Committee	FULL COUNCIL
Date	19 JULY 2023
Title	LEADER'S UPDATE
Report of	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Following a successful competitive tender Public Health have a new weight management service offer. The service will be known locally as Gloji Isle of Wight for the respective geographies and went live on 1 July 2023. Gloji is a specialist, experienced provider of well-being improvement services, committed to bringing about real, lasting improvements to the communities in which they operate. The offer will include a more traditional proposal; digital weight loss programme and a community physical activity pathway.

Adult Social Care and Housing Needs have confirmed that the partnership between Wightcare and the Ambulance Service to support people who fall in their own homes has been nominated for an award in the Health Service Journal (HSJ) Awards 2023. Also, DLUCH have recently undertaken an assurance visit relating to our approach to Rough Sleeping visit last week; we are awaiting the final report but the visit was positive overall. Finally, Wightcare have secured its re-accreditation with the TSA.

The council recently completed a Cyber 360 engagement with the Local Government Association (LGA). Over a three-day period, consultants interviewed councillors, senior officers, managers and a range of staff from across the council. At the heart of a Cyber 360 is improving cyber security culture. The resulting feedback will aid the council in prioritising ways we can improve, governance, awareness, and training. It will also look at the ways our technology selection and usage may impact on the Cyber Security culture.

The revenues team have recently had confirmation from the Business Grants and Investments Directorate (part of the Department for Business and Trade) with regard to the reconciliation of all the business grants which the revenues team administered during Covid, and we were delighted to hear that 'based on the assurance evidence supplied by the council, none of the businesses that were assessed have been identified as ineligible for the grant they received. The administration of business grants whereby the team made over 17,000 payments equating to more than £100 million is an example of great teamwork, and we should all be proud of the hard work and dedication that has gone into achieving this. It should not be underestimated how many businesses this financial support assisted and the impact this support had on the Island's economy'. The government's alternative energy rebate schemes established to assist residents who did not receive the

energy rebate directly from their supplier or who use an alternative fuel closed at the end of May. As the application process was challenging the revenues team joined forces with 'Pan Together' colleagues to promote the schemes at the Pan Community Centre and local school to encourage take up of the government funding. 1211 applications were received across the two schemes of which 1125 were paid totalling £362,200.00.

The benefits team are continuing to process new claims within an average of 13 days and changes to claims within 5 days to ensure that monies are received as soon as resident's circumstances have changed thereby ensuring that they receive the correct entitlement to benefits and that monies are paid in a timely manner. A member of the team took part in a podcast series with Vectis Radio to promote the support available to residents who are experiencing financial difficulties as a result of the cost of living crisis.

In March we signed up for the National Age Friendly Pledge and earlier this month a review meeting was held which was an opportunity for us to showcase the various initiatives we have put in place to evidence that we are an age friendly employer. They were keen to hear about our approach to flexible and hybrid working enabling staff to juggle their work commitments with that of childcare or caring responsibilities and were particularly interested to learn about our carers group set up by Laura Gaudion providing support for colleagues who have caring responsibilities. They will be sharing this initiative with other organisations at the LGA conference.

The Island's first modern co-working space at Building 41 based on the BAE campus is proving very popular and is building on the opportunity of most areas of the Island becoming full fibre connected by the end of this year. New businesses starting, existing ones growing and people dropping in while visiting relatives from the mainland are all using this fantastic facility.

Our Biosphere vision has also been brought to life by the development at Branstone Farm, working in partnership with Vectis housing, new homes for 54 island families, a new business centre and a new brewery have all opened. Living and working together while protecting our natural environment the Branstone scheme is an example of the right kind of development which suits the island perfectly.

The East Cowes Marine hub, Levelling Up fund project has delivered more marine jobs through a new boat hoist and more manufacturing space, the development of the barracks and a brilliant new public area, designed in conjunction with the local community, are next to be done this year. I was delighted to host Michael Gove at the Islands Forum in East Cowes and he congratulated us on this great package of projects. I'm also pleased to see the long awaited plans for the new Red Funnel terminal have been put out for consultation.

Our new cultural strategy was given a massive boost last month when the National Gallery chose Newport as the pop up location for John Constables "Cornfields". Over 2500 people visited the exhibit which is another great example of partnership with the new Community council offices providing the ideal location.

As one of the 14 UK Trailblazing Local Authorities for the Government funded Start for Life and Family Hub programme, the Isle of Wight hosted a visit from the Government's Early Years Advisor Dame Andrea Leadsom MP last week.

The visit allowed a range of cross-sector partners to come together to share their collective work to develop the Family Hub offer, with a range of presentations and sessions, as well as an opportunity for Dame Andrea and her team to visit Ryde Family Centre.

The initial feedback from Dame Andrea was extremely positive; whereby she stated that she wished to personally write to us with her feedback on the way in which we are developing the programme. Dame Andrea and the team shared that they were impressed by the way in which we co-produce and locate services for expectant parents and families.

Housing Renewal: Officers have successfully reduced the DFG waiting list. We are still reporting the highest ever demand for these grants with an expected end of year commitment to be in the region of £4million.

Environmental Health: The internal audit has been completed with some exception reporting and recommendations. At the beginning of the quarter the team were involved with an outbreak investigation. This has now been passed to the Health and Safety Executive. The event season has now started and officers are busy 7 days a week. All proactive inspections from 22/23 relating to Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) and Petroleum Licensing completed.

Trading Standards: Trading Standards have saved £43,169 through interventions. This was achieved through a mix of direct referrals to the Service including scams and financial abuse, along with referrals from the national Scams Hub. In addition, we have installed call blockers at identified vulnerable consumer's homes who have been victims of scams and this has been a mixture of units obtained from the national team and our own units. The Service has several large investigations ongoing at present with significant financial detriment to local residents. Further enforcement action has been taken around illegal vapes with a quantity of unsafe ones being seized from a local premise. Underage Sales test purchasing enforcement has also been carried out including working with the Police on 'Operation Sceptre' for knives, alcohol and vapes at the IW Festival and a separate vapes test purchasing operation. The Festival was compliant with this and with the Weights and Measures checks that were conducted at the bars on site. However, our test purchasing outside of the event and on the separate operation with retailers across the island has shown some non-compliances that we are in the process of following up.

Licensing: The service undertook a joint exercise with VOSA and the police on our taxi trade and compliance of vehicles. The service has had a considerable increase of Temporary Event Notifications this year.