



# Full Council Report

Meeting	<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>
Date	<b>17 JANUARY 2024</b>
Title	<b>LEADER'S UPDATE REPORT</b>
Report of	<b>LEADER OF THE COUNCIL</b>

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Whilst this is my report covering the period since the last Full Council, at this time of year, like me, I am sure many of you start to reflect on the year as a whole. It has been a challenging year both for this council and local authorities generally and I am sure you will all agree that the challenge as we move into 2024 is not diminishing.

## **Support for the emergency flooding incident**

Following Storm Babet which hit the Island 19-25 October the Revenues team are administering the financial support, provided by Government, to households and businesses by means of community and business recovery grants. Flooded households in affected areas can apply for up to £500 to get cash quickly to help with immediate costs and small to medium sized businesses are eligible for up to £2500 where they have experienced flooding or restricted access which has resulted in a loss of trade. The team have received just over 240 applications and to date have processed 73 payments.

## **Adult Community Learning awards**

Adult Community Learning (ACL) held their annual awards evening on 14 November at Westridge, Ryde as part of the National Festival of Learning. The ACL service handed out 14 awards recognising the achievements of people across a range of subjects. The awards were presented by the High Sheriff Dawn Haig-Thomas. As ever, it was an opportunity to share the stories that showcase the achievements of individuals who have completed courses with the Isle of Wight Council's Adult Community Learning Service or with one of our seven partners. It was inspiring to see the range of learning people have undertaken and the impact this has had, not just on their own lives, but also on their family and community. There was not a dry eye in the house.

## **Age Friendly Employer Pledge**

In recognition of the steps that the council has taken to be an age friendly employer, working closely with Age UK IW, Sarah Teague Strategic Manager for Learning and Development has been invited to speak at the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) national webinar on 6 February to share how the council has translated policy into practise and how the activities and initiatives our age friendly champions have undertaken have improved the opportunities for our older residents.

## **Local Government Association's Cyber 360 support programme**

Our engagement with the Local Government Association's Cyber 360 support programme has now led to the development of a comprehensive cyber security strategy for the council which will at its heart seek to ensure that the delivery of local government services on the Isle of Wight will be resilient to cyber-attack. The strategy led by Cllr Lucioni within her cabinet portfolio is built upon the key principles of building of a strong foundation of organisational cyber security resilience and to work closely with partner organisations and suppliers to present a defensive force against cyber-crime.

## **Island Green Link**

The Isle of Wight Council have been successful in receiving funding of £13.6 Million for a transport related bid that it submitted in 2022, known as the Island Green link.

The Island Green Link will create a transformational east/west active and sustainable transport corridor on the Isle of Wight extending from Ryde to Yarmouth .It will improve transport infrastructure along the route and create new links to existing infrastructure to deliver improved connectivity with communities and transport interchanges. These new routes and connections will provide low-carbon low-cost options that transform short and intermediate distance travel opportunities for residents and visitors.

## **Town Bid**

Ryde was selected by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities as one of 55 towns across the UK that will receive funding of £20 Million over a 10-year period to invest in local peoples' priorities and projects. Following the recent Government guidance on management, oversight and delivery of the overall funding stream, key projects and initiatives that support local plans and aspirations in Ryde will be brought forward and separately project managed to completion.

## **Children's Services**

Ofsted undertook a full graded inspection of our Children's Services for 2 weeks from 23 October 2023. It was a necessarily forensic inspection of the whole service, and I am delighted to say that we have retained our judgement of Good. As with any inspection there is learning for the service, but this is a positive outcome and puts the Island in a strong position as the partnership with Hampshire comes to an end.

In a related matter, following a successful recruitment process, a new Director of Children's Services has been appointed to take over from Stuart Ashley when the partnership with Hampshire ends at the end of January. We are pleased to be welcoming Ashley Whittaker who will take up post on 1 February 2024. I am sure you will join me in welcoming our new Director of Children's Services.

The Department for Education (DfE) announced in their Spring Budget an investment of over £4.1 billion to boost the Early Years sector. Part of these childcare reform announcements include the 'Expanded early Years Entitlement' and the 'National Wraparound Programme'.

## Expanded Early Years Entitlement

For the Expanded Early Years Entitlement, the DfE has announced an investment of £3.9 billion for funded childcare hours being extended to children of eligible working parents in England from nine months old to support increased parental engagement in the labour market. The expansion is being rolled out as a staggered approach between April 2024 and September 2025 and the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) has received an initial £55,000 to meet programme and delivery costs associated with rolling out these expanded entitlements.

With regards to childcare wrapped around the conventional school day, the DfE announced an investment of £289 million for the national wraparound programme which will come into effect from September 2024.

The IWC will receive £638,626 of funding to undertake the roll out of this programme, split over three years, which will support us to increase the supply of wraparound places, to ensure provision for all parents who may need it, meeting current demand and building further demand.

In addition to this, the IOW Council has received a Childcare Expansion grant allocation of £200,970 to support both programmes. The purpose of this funding is to increase the physical capacity of early years and wraparound provision in local areas where demand is likely to exceed existing supply.

## Public Health

Following Chris Whitty's visit to the Isle of Wight earlier in the year the Isle of Wight public health team was asked to contribute to the Chief Medical Officer for England's report on Health in an Aging Society

A new Isle of Wight Adult Behavioural Tier 2 Weight Management service commenced on the 1 July 2023, [Gloji Isle of Wight](#) with three different channels of delivery: face-to-face group sessions, digital-only/digital with telephone support, and a tier 2 weight management programme with physical activity as a central component (the physical activity is swimming). At the end of the first quarter (Jul-Sep 23) there had been 451 enrolments onto the 12-week programme. The outcome data including completions and 5% weight loss or more for the first quarter is due in the New Year due to the 12-week lag in data.

A fall prevention booklet has been published online in partnership with Energise Me and Isle of Wight NHS Trust. Hard copies have been distributed to partners, including GPs, community groups, charities and libraries with signposting to health services and exercise classes. The leaflet provides information regarding preventing a fall by implementing simple measures, such as ensuring footwear fits appropriately and actions to avoid potential trip hazards.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the significant landslide that we have seen in Bonchurch. My thanks on behalf of the council to all those that were involved in supporting residents and local business owners who were directly affected.

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