



Committee: **FULL COUNCIL**

Date: **16 NOVEMBER 2022**

Title: **LEADER'S UPDATE**

Report of: **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

I have always said that providing support to enable people to recovery from the impacts of Covid is one of my top priorities and this is now combined with ensuring that as a council we do all that we can to work with other public bodies and groups and communities on the Island over the winter to support residents in this very challenging time.

The teams in revenues, benefits, payments and the contact centre have collectively processed 55,565 energy rebate payments to households living in properties banded A-D equating to £8,334,750. A further 266 payments have been made under the discretionary scheme which provides support to residents on low incomes living in properties banded higher than a D amounting to £39,900. Both schemes now remain open until the end of November, so a final social media campaign is encouraging late applications.

We have just launched a new grants scheme which can provide up to £3,000 to help organisations deliver initiatives that support families, children and young people living on the Isle of Wight. The funding is intended to help providers organise activities, clubs or groups for families, parents/carers and/or young people and can be used to set up and run schemes such as parental, baby or toddler groups, teenage groups, family-based groups, mental health and welcoming sessions/hubs, peer support groups, outreach support and community-led groups and activities. Grant applications have to be in by 28 November 2022.

As pressure has continued to build on Adult Social Care and housing need services in the run up to winter the teams continue to work really hard. Last week saw the opening of a new service at Blue Bells in Ventnor, providing short term recovery and reablement care specifically to support people leaving hospital over the winter. It is hoped that the new service will have positive impact for local people, their families and support our local NHS Trust.

We are gathering together information on help and support for people on a new single webpage and we will be using our libraries as warm spaces over the winter. I

want to pay tribute again to our community and voluntary sector who are rallying around again to provide local support for residents.

We have also recently seen the impact of some early winter storms on the Island and in particular the damage to the eastern esplanade at Ventnor. This part of the wall will form part of the future coastal protection scheme the council and the Environment Agency are developing. Unfortunately the damage to this structure recently has meant that we will need to do some emergency works in the near future. This part of the sea wall is dangerous and is closed to pedestrians and vehicles. We would like to assure the Ventnor community that we are working closely with our colleagues in the environment agency to protect the community, property and the environment.

I am relieved and pleased to see the first residents moving in at Branstone Farm and also that the project won "Construction Project of the Year" at a recent regional business awards ceremony. Projects such as this are many months, years even in the planning and I thank the local member Cllr Mosdell for her support at the concept of this project.

The new Procurement Strategy was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on the 13 October 2022. The Strategy is focused around four key themes being:

1. Local community wealth building .
2. Commercial approach.
3. Skills and capabilities.
4. Climate and environment

These themes will underpin our procurement processes and will be embedded in the way we procure our goods, services and works. The Skills and Capabilities theme is cross cutting and shall ensure that everyone involved in the council's procurement processes, from staff to suppliers, have the right knowledge and skills.