

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 10 July 2019
Councillor Michael Wilson

Leader of the Council

Corporate Strategy

The revised and updated Corporate Strategy and business plans for 2019-20 were reviewed and agreed at Full Council on 27th February 2019 as part of the budget setting process. The papers from that meeting provide a clear outline of the key strategic aims and objectives that will be delivered by the council over the coming year. Our senior management team is now working with colleagues to deliver against the key business plan aims and priorities.

We will be reviewing the Corporate Strategy annually to ensure that it continues to reflect our current priorities.

External Relations (including PUSH, HIOWLA & Solent LEP representative for HBC & SEEC

Solent LEP AGM – Friday 5th April

Following the LEP review, The Solent LEP is now made up entirely of coastal authorities with the loss of the parts of Winchester, Test Valley and East Hampshire (although they will remain partners under the duty to cooperate). This coastal focus supports the use of the description of the area as a 'Global Maritime Hub'; however, there is more to the area than just maritime business. It was acknowledged that outside of the region, there is a recognition and identity for the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton, but not a recognition of The Solent as a distinct area. Further, the term 'coastal communities' has recently acquired connotations of social deprivation which may be negative. Unlike the Northern Power Houses and the Midlands, there was a lack of a southern brand.

On the 13th May representatives of the LEP were given a tour of Havant to promote the regeneration strategy and familiarise the LEP with the opportunities for investment.

PUSH Joint Committee Meeting Tuesday 4th June

The main topic for discussion at the recent PUSH Joint Committee meeting was the issue of nutrient neutrality and its impact upon housebuilding. The issue has arisen as a result of a case at the European Court of Justice (known as the 'Dutch Case'). The judgment refined the definition of plans and projects which could have an impact on water quality. The quality in the Solent is affected by the levels of nitrogen. Whilst it is understood that approximately 60% is due to run off from agriculture, domestic generation is also a factor. What this means is that in simple terms any new development cannot increase the level of nitrogen or other elements affecting water quality and for

development to be acceptable each new unit must be able to mitigate to be nutrient neutral. Inevitably, this has had an impact on the determination of planning applications. The discussion at PUSH, which included representatives from Natural England and Southern Water concentrated on ways of providing mitigation to enable development to recommence.

HBC has taken a lead in both identifying the implications of the judgement and possible solutions. There is a view that the issue may require central government intervention to provide national guidance and a solution or range of solutions which will provide mitigation. I have written to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to bring the issue to their attention and lobby for a solution, given the impact on the Government's current policy on housing and development.

Solent Leaders Meeting – Monday 17th June

As part of the LEP review, I made the case for increased involvement and influence of the districts, who are currently only represented by one district leader. In the past, district leaders had a role in scrutiny, after the event, but not at an early stage in decision making. The outcome of those representations has been the creation of the Solent Leaders' Forum, to enable an input into future business of the Solent LEP. The main issue is the creation of local industrial strategies in the light of a clear steer from the Government that they expect local enterprise areas to develop an industrial strategy based upon their particular strengths.

Havant hosted the second Leaders' Forum which provided an opportunity to outline our regeneration strategy and the significant opportunities both economically and associated domestic development that Havant can provide to the region.

Corporate Performance

Cabinet members will provide reports on performance across their portfolios; however, I do wish to highlight a few items on overall corporate performance.

Work has been focussed on our end of year reporting documents. We have produced our draft Statement of Accounts which details our financial position at the end of 2018-19, the final version is due to be published by 31st July 2019 following review by External Audit. The draft revenue outturn position for the year ending 2018-19 was a £528,000 surplus before carry forwards of £428,000 which result in an overall surplus position of £100,000. This is a real achievement against £2.2M of budget challenge targets that were included in 2018-19 budget which have been achieved through a mixture of income growth and operational efficiencies. In addition to the draft Statement of Accounts we have produced our draft Annual Governance Statement highlighting our systems and processes that are in place to maintain our corporate governance arrangements. Both our draft Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement can be found on our website.

Maintaining financial stability and a balanced budget is a key concern and therefore work has commenced on a full review of our MTFS which will take place during 2019-20. This work will seek to ensure that the council remains financially sustainable in the future despite resource constraints. Updates on progress will be provided on this during the year. Despite all the additional demand pressures and national funding cuts we continue to deliver efficient and high quality services to our residents. Operational performance remains strong with all national planning application targets met as well as high collection rates for Council Tax and business rates.

Despite a continued rise in homeless/potentially homeless customers during 2018-19 there were only seven cases accepted as homelessness, reflecting the hard work of our Housing Team with high levels on intervention work to ensure our vulnerable customers are not made homeless. Further to that we also achieved our target of engaging with 150 troubled families with a total of 195 families given support on a range of issues from domestic abuse, health and children in need.

Regeneration is central to our policy direction and I am pleased to report that our Regeneration Strategy work is gathering pace with Homes England providing a £3.4 million funding deal with the council under its Accelerated Construction Programme. This funding will enable work on development of new homes on the council's surface car parks at Civic Campus. Specifically, the funding will cover the costs of procuring a development partner and the re-provisioning of the existing car parking spaces within the campus site.

I am keen for us to work with partner organisations to enable regeneration and The Solent LEP is a key partner. It has agreed to support our regeneration programme by funding an infrastructure review that will support our plans for the future of the borough. I am pleased that they are engaged with our vision and I believe this will be the first stage of our work in partnership with the LEP to deliver our vision for the area.

You're A Star

It is always a pleasure to present the You're A Star Awards and the latest ceremony took place on Monday 24th June. This quarter 16 awards were presented; these comprised of individual and team awards presented for a variety of reasons where members of staff have worked over and above expectations in their role. One of the awards included a long service award for a member of staff who has been with Havant Borough Council for 40 years. I remain very impressed by the variety of ways in which staff have excelled in their roles. Well done to all of you.

Michael Wilson

1st July 2019