

## **Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 22 February 2017**

### **Councillor Mike Cheshire: Leader's Report**

#### **Corporate Strategy, Finance and Devolution, PUSH, Councillor's 1:1 discussion**

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##### **Finance**

The Budget speech will be delivered on the day of the Full Council meeting.

##### **Devolution and the Combined Authority**

At the time of writing this report, "Devolution" remains on the Government's Agenda, but the expected announcement of a Combined Authority between Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and the IOW has not yet happened. It is firmly believed by all relevant Local Authority Leaders that this proposal is unlikely to be ratified in the near future.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> January I attended a meeting in Westminster with a number of other Hampshire Local Government Leaders and Hampshire MP's to discuss Devolution and Combined Authorities. It was a robust discussion that lasted for 1 ½ hours where each Authority and Hampshire MP had a chance to discuss the current Devolution issue.

I stated that as far as Havant was concerned we will be looking at all options moving forward and that the Cabinet and the Council's mind is not closed to any proposals, but we will always make whatever decisions we need to, based upon the best deal (whatever that is) for the residents of Havant Borough.

I also had a 1:1 political meeting with the Leader of Hampshire to explore how more "Service integration" as well as "HCC/HBC co-location" of staff might be reviewed to affect more savings through economies of scale. Although this offer was favourably received, the outcome was that to move this initiative forward, HBC should provide a full Business Plan. I intend re-visiting this initiative after the County Council elections in May 2017.

##### **PUSH**

The planned PUSH meeting for February was cancelled – the next PUSH meeting is planned for the middle of March 2017, so there is nothing to report.

##### **SOLENT LEADERS MEETING**

The only thing to report to Council on this meeting has been articulated in my Devolution/CA piece above. Suffice to say that over the last 18 months or so,

the CA/Devolution debate has dominated all the Solent Leaders attention at these meetings.

## **INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Over the last two weeks, I have had a number of 1:1 meetings with my Conservative Member colleagues, and I am grateful for the open and frank debates we have had in private session.

Notwithstanding all of the individual issues that have been discussed with my colleagues, one theme appears to remain the focus of some concern; and that is the subject of internal communications.

You will be aware that the CEO, Directors, myself and all members of the Cabinet are available for discussion at any time. However, it appears to me that I need to do more.

As a result, in addition to the regular Councillor seminars that are arranged over the course of a year, on the days that our Full Council meetings are planned, both the CEO and myself will arrange for a no agenda time for Councillors to discuss any subject (between 1600 and 1645) on that afternoon.

I will ask the CEO to invite any Directors that might be available to join us as well.

If this is successful then we can review how often we might continue these meetings. Both the CEO and myself have this type of meeting with opposition members, (which I understand are still welcome, although on one occasion only two opposition members turn up!). Meetings are also held with members of staff.

On the same theme of Internal Communications, the Cabinet's regular meeting with the Havant County Councillors will continue next municipal year and will start after the County Council elections in May 2017.