

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 29 March 2017

Councillor Mike Cheshire: Leader's Report

Finance and Devolution, PUSH, Housing White Paper, HLOWLGA, Business Rates Retention, Solent Growth Forum, TCPA Spring Conference, Internal Communications.

Finance

After a huge amount of work was undertaken by the Finance team, the budgets for 2017/18 were finally approved in full at the Full Council meeting on the evening of 22nd February 2017. As highlighted in the budget speech, there remains considerable challenge within next years numbers to achieve a balanced budget.

In terms of this financial year, we are still anticipating a full year surplus of circa £500k, which will mean that we do not have to draw down from the general fund to balance the books as had been anticipated.

There has been significant progress with finance in terms of improving the levels of Finance reporting and ownership of budgets at a service and Director level, with regular performance reviews now happening.

As we approach October 1st and TUPE transfer of Finance staff to our partner, Capita there will be increasing demands upon the finance team and the Head of Finance to ensure a smooth transfer. We continue to be supportive of our dedicated team and all the great work they do to manage the finances of this council.

Devolution and the Combined Authority

The Leaders of Hampshire's Councils have yet to receive any word from Government on the status of the Solent Combined Authority bid and do not expect to do so soon. The Leaders will continue to discuss opportunities for further collaborations in the coming months and I will keep all Councillors updates on any progress.

Business Rates Retention

There is a movement by Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to pilot the retention of 100% business rates to two tier authorities and consequently a further round of consultation has started, which runs until Wednesday 03 May 2017 on the design of the reformed system.

The DCLG is building on the existing pilot scheme and will be inviting all councils to apply to participate in piloting aspects of 100% Business Rates Retention from April 2018. A decision on whether we can / wish to participate cannot be made until all information on this has been released and considered.

Housing White Paper

The Government has released a Housing white paper “Fixing our broken housing market” which sets out a broad range of reforms that government plans to introduce to help change the housing market and increase the supply of new homes.

There is a consultation period that runs until 02 May 2017, which draws together the Government’s programme for housing market reform, although there seems to be no new substantive measures which have not previously been mentioned in recent bills or consultations.

It is worth also noting that there seems to be limited implications for our progressing the Local Plan, which means we can stay on course to ensure that we are able to get an up-to-date plan in place as soon as possible.

Please do attend one of the seminars being held on Monday 03 April 2017 where you will be given an overview of the provisions of the White Paper, be able to explore how the White Paper could, if at all, affect how we move forward with the new Local Plan, this follows on from the visioning workshops the week before and discuss whether the Council should respond to the consultation and if so, what that response should be. Again, I urge all Councillors to get involved.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Government Association (HIOWLGA)

The HIOWLGA meeting was held on 03 March 2017 with a number of topics being discussed:

The impending Housing White Paper consultation and the various grants that may become available for those local authorities serious about housing delivery.

Councillor Barbara Hurst, Rushmoor was appointed as member of the Hampshire County Council Health & Adult Social Care Select (O&S) Committee.

Councillor Roy Perry, Leader of Hampshire County Council provided a briefing on the National Infrastructure Commission visit to Hampshire. The visit focussed on the importance of Hampshire's infrastructure to the region and England. The first phase of the Solent light rapid transport bid has been approved: Solent Local Enterprise Partnership will now be seeking further input from Solent councils for the next phase.

Michael Lane, Police and Crime Commissioner, provided an overview of their recent inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). They were rated "good" for neighbourhood policing, organised crime, anti-social behaviour and vulnerability; however domestic abuse, education, rehabilitation and concerns regarding a shortage of skills are areas of focus going forward.

PUSH / Solent Growth Forum

This meeting on Tuesday 14 March 2017 was attending by Tony Briggs, Deputy Leader in my stead.

Strategic level agenda items covered included the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) Coordinators Report, Budget Monitoring Report, Green Infrastructure, Housing White Paper, Industrial Strategy Green Paper, Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership, Inward Investment and Productivity and a discussion on the future strategic focus of PUSH.

Outcome of this meeting was that:

- The Push budget was approved.
- It was agreed to respond to the Housing White Paper – Councillor Guy Shepherd from East Hampshire District Council presented some thoughtful solutions to addressing the issue of developers land banking.
- The Industrial Strategy Green paper was agreed.
- Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership – there was discussion that resulted in the paper being requested to be reviewed again in June 2017. There were a number of key issues addressed including impact of a mitigation tariff on affordable housing, a justification of 70 years being taken as in perpetuity and how to address the assumption that this would be the last plan period that would attract the charges.
- There was a presentation on inward investment for the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership – slides are on their website.
- It was agreed to accept the paper on the strategic focus of PUSH in the future.

Solent Leaders Meeting

This meeting on Tuesday 14 March 2017 was also attended by Tony Briggs, Deputy Leader in my stead.

Outcome and discussion from this meeting will be reported within Cllr Tony Briggs, Deputy Leader's report.

Town and Country Planning Association Annual Conference

Tony Briggs, Deputy Leader attended the TCPA Spring Conference on 23 March in my stead.

The conference aimed to answer a number of questions facing local authorities in a post-BREXIT environment, in which Government spending remains tightly constrained. Topics included, financing new large-scale developments, creating value through local leadership and innovation, implications of the Housing white paper and the 2017 budget for creating new communities and garden cities.

Anything of note as a result of this conference will be communicated verbally at the Full Council meeting.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Councillor 121 Sessions – these are now completed and I would like to thank those councillors that took the trouble to complete their questionnaires and come to speak to me. The result of these conversations will be used to appoint next years' areas of responsibility and will be communicated to you all prior to Mayor making.

Those councillors involved in Scrutiny panels going forward will be appointed by the Scrutiny chairman.

HCC / HBC Meeting - As I stated as part of my Leaders report in February, the Cabinet's regular meeting with the Havant County Councillors are set to continue next municipal year and dates have now been put in the diary for June 2017, October 2017 and February 2018.

Annual Youth Conference - On 10 March 2017 the Mayor opened the annual youth conference in the Plaza, which was attended by all 9 secondary schools in the Borough. The conference was very well received by the schools, officers and the councillors who took part in the Question & Answer session in the afternoon.

Following short presentations given by 3 young people on topics relevant to the youth of the borough 'beat the bullies, Motiv8 and Music Fusion, the delegates were given the opportunity to vote for their winner. As a result of that vote the first prize went to Music Fusion of £2,500, second prize was awarded to 'beat the bullies' of £1,000 and the third prize awarded to Motiv8 of £500. All three organisations deliver services that benefit young people in the local community.

It was really nice to see so many councillors taking an active role in the afternoon, thank you.

Local GC Awards – 6 Councils - I had the pleasure of attending the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards 2017 in London on 08 March 2017 with Leaders and Officers from a number of the other local authorities we are in partnership with on the 6 Councils project.

The project was nominated in the 'Most Innovative Service Delivery Model' category and although we did not win the award this time, it is still a great achievement to receive the recognition on a national stage for the good work we are doing in the Borough and provided plenty of networking opportunities with various Leaders and Officers from other innovative and forward thinking councils such as ours.

Partnership Working with East Hampshire District Council - You may have heard that Councillor Ferris Cowper, Leader of EHDC has announced his intention of stepping down as Leader following this year's elections. We have built a strong partnership between the two councils with a number of services now being delivered jointly providing value for money and saving millions of pounds for both EHDC and HBC residents and we will of course continue to work together to ensure this partnership stays strong and

continues to deliver the best results for our residents. We wish Councillor Cowper well and look forward to welcoming the new Leader, post May.

Winchester City Council – The Chief Executive and I are due to meet with the new Leader and Chief Executive of Winchester City Council on 03 April 2017. This will provide opportunity for us to all meet each other and to help ensure we maintain good working relationships and understanding with neighbouring councils. We hope to have the opportunity to discuss topics such as the impact on council resources and facilities used by residents of the new housing development close to Waterlooville town centre that is within WCC's boundary.