

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 22 January 2019
Councillor Michael Wilson

Leader of the Council

Introduction

As you will be aware, the Meridian Centre was purchased by the council shortly before Christmas. I do not wish to dwell on the detail as that is a matter for others to report, however, the purchase is a key milestone in this council's regeneration strategy. Not only does it give us control over the very heart of the town, but it is also a message to residents and other stakeholders that we are serious in our intentions to improve and regenerate our town and district centres. Whilst we are looking forward to economic benefits from the purchase, the social and symbolic imperatives are to the fore.

Corporate Strategy

Work has continued between officers and Cabinet on the development of a revised Corporate Strategy with a further Cabinet session held on 20 November. During the session on 20 November Officers presented the latest evidence and insight for the area for Cabinet members to review and consider alongside their proposed priorities going forward. Following discussions on 20 November Cabinet members provided detailed comments on the latest draft Corporate Strategy and officers have reviewed and taken on board those comments received.

We have used an evidence-based approach to develop this strategy. This has helped us to understand the needs of our communities, businesses and the local economy and to show us where we spend our resources.

Based on this insight we have developed five themes. All themes are interlinked and progress in one area will support the delivery of all the themes.

The wider financial context sees us with dwindling central government funding and greater impetus for us to be more efficient in the way we deliver services.

Our approach is to ensure that every single penny of taxpayers' money is delivering the very best returns for our community.

The five identified themes of the Corporate Strategy are:

- An environmentally aware and cleaner borough
We want Havant to set high standards for environmental sustainability. This will be fundamental to any future development or regeneration project.
- A safer environment, healthier and more active residents
We intend to improve the quality of life for our residents and ensure equality of opportunity across our areas
- A thriving local economy
We intend playing a key role in promoting economic prosperity within our borough and campaign to attract new businesses to our area and will work with employers who wish to relocate and/or grow their businesses
- Infrastructure that matches our ambitions
To succeed on the delivery of our themes we must ensure that the physical infrastructure is in place, working with partners in the public, private and third sector to initiate and create development schemes and regeneration.
- Creating a sustainable council
Our approach to delivering services needs to focus on how we manage ever-decreasing financial support but seeking to deliver ever-increasing outcomes moving from a service provider approach to resident demand approach by better understanding the real needs and aspirations of our residents.

Each theme will detail a breakdown of the evidence, our intent for what we are trying to achieve for the borough and what we will develop going forward to deliver that intent.

The Corporate Strategy is scheduled to be taken through council in February 2020 alongside the budget and business plans.

Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH), Hampshire & Isle Of Wight Local Authorities (HLOWLA) & Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) representative for HBC

Solent LEP – Solent 2050 Strategy – 8 January 2020

On the 8th January I met with Anne-Marie Mountifield and Gary Jeffries, respectively the Chief Executive and Chair of the Solent LEP. The purpose of the meeting was to provide Havant's input to the emerging Solent 2050 local industrial strategy, which will align to the Government's UK Industrial Strategy and support economic growth and prosperity across the region.

The Solent LEP has shown keen interest in our plans for regeneration and this has led to support for an infrastructure review which will seek to identify our needs to enable regeneration and will provide evidence to support funding applications in due course.

Our suggestions for green transport routes within the borough have been particularly well received. I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with the Solent LEP during 2020.

Solent Leaders Forum – 10 January 2020

With the return to office of a Government which owes a substantial debt to the North of England, the emphasis at the meeting was on providing a combined voice to compete for government funding which may well prove more difficult to secure in our region than before. There was a warning to 'sense check' our priorities for infrastructure and public transport before making any bids.

Work continues on providing a statement of common ground on housing provision for the Pfish authorities as is required by government. Emphasis is on identifying strategic development opportunity areas (SDOAs) which could assist with the housing numbers required under the government's current methodology.

A presentation by Transport for the South East outlined its draft Transport Strategy which is aiming to provide greater connectivity between economic areas in the South rather than an emphasis on routes in and out of London. There is a recognition that roads such as the A27 and A205 are in need of improvement. The discussions highlighted the need to improve rail and bus travel within the strategy, together with consideration for water transport which has potential to provide some relief on other transport routes. It was recognised that greener travel, ie electric cars, would not alleviate the congestion problem.

The Queen's Speech included an item on devolution; however, there was scant detail of the form it may take, this time round.

Leader Attendances

Havant Business Partnership – SEE – 14 November 2019

I was pleased to attend the most recent meeting of the HBP. The discussions centred on assistance available for SMEs from the Solent LEP. The support ranges from funding in the form of grants and loans to business management advice and intervention. It was clear that most businesses represented had little or no idea that this assistance was on offer and it was hoped that effective ways of disseminating the information direct to business could be found. Information was discussed about apprenticeships and how this can be beneficial to the student and the business concerned.

Havant and Southdowns College representatives set out more information on the new T levels which are set to transform vocational training. They rely on a

close working relationship with the business community to provide the workplace training required.

Hampshire 2050 Partnership – Winchester – 26 November 2019

I was pleased to support HCC's work to achieve a clear identity for Hampshire to ensure continued prosperity over the next 30 years whilst enhancing and not damaging our natural and cultural assets. What was clear from the workshop and presentations is that the county is multi-faceted and each district contributed a different view of what was the essence of Hampshire.

Horizon Board Meeting – 28 November 2019

I attended a board meeting of Horizon Leisure Trust following an invite. I was pleased to meet the board members, some for the first time and to understand the governance of the borough's two leisure facilities managed by the trust.

You're a star – 09 December 2019

This provided another opportunity for me to meet members of staff face to face and congratulate them on their achievements over tea and cake!

Commissioning HM Prince of Wales – 10 December 2019

I was honoured to be invited to the commissioning of the latest of the UK's aircraft carriers. The ceremony, which took place on the flight deck gave the attendees some idea of the sheer size of the vessel. The Duchess of Cornwall described it as big enough to hold 28 Clarence Houses, which is as good a comparison as any!

Discussing the importance of the ship to the region in terms of employment and the economy, I realised that I personally knew five individuals connected to the ship either in design, construction or as a serving officer.

Havant Thicket Reservoir – 19 December 2019

Portsmouth Water hosted a presentation and site visit to outline its plans to create a reservoir at Havant Thicket. I was impressed that the plans will not only provide water security to the southern region by harnessing our spring water which flows out to sea when not required but will also provide an amenity asset for the whole borough. There is scope for a nature reserve for birds and wildlife and in effect a waterside country park.