

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council

Councillor Tim Pike

Finance

The exchequer services cover processing of invoices, purchase orders and cash handling, which is a shared services with East Hampshire District Council. We are in the process of reviewing processes that are currently in place to improve these services and streamline efficiency.

Work to finalise the outturn and Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 is underway and will be reported on schedule. We are also reviewing pandemic related risks to the 2021/22 budget and this will be reported back to Councillors and built into the 2022/23 budget setting process.

Regeneration

We continue to make progress on our ambitious Regeneration Strategy for the Borough. Given the significant changes to the economic climate and the impact of the Covid pandemic on our High Streets and Town Centres, I plan to refresh the strategy later this year and hope to start work on this in the summer.

Havant Town Centre

We continue to work to secure external funding and investment opportunities, to help us deliver the ambitious vision set out in the masterplan. We are currently working on a submission to the Levelling Up Fund, which will be submitted in mid June. This will focus on areas including Havant Park, Meridian Centre and Bulbeck Road carpark and if successful, will provide much needed funded to help us accelerate delivery and bring forward the regeneration of that part of the town centre. We also continue to work positively with Homes England, Network Rail and a range of other key partners – who will all be important as we start to deliver the vision.

Hayling Seafront Strategy

Work is underway to develop a new vision for Hayling Seafront, building on all of the work and stakeholder engagement to date. The Hayling Billy Trail remains a really popular route for residents and businesses and is a real asset to Hayling. Working in partnership with Hampshire County Council, we are working up new ideas for how the trail can be enhanced and also progressing some of the more ambitious plans set out in our masterplan for the Town Centre. We've previously submitted a bid to the Restoring Railways fund for £50k to support feasibility work to help us develop those plans – and are awaiting the outcome.

Leigh Park

We have recently been successfully shortlisted for the Health Foundation's Economies for Healthier Lives fund. If successful, this will provide funding for us to launch a new programme of work to help young people in Leigh Park access employment and training and to work to address health inequalities. The funding will potentially provide £300k-£500k over three years, with successful bids notified in the summer.

Economic Development

Covid-19 Business support

The Economy Team continues to provide a direct advice and support service to our local businesses on sources of grant funding and assistance during the current pandemic. The team is also playing a key role in helping businesses apply for the current round of Restart Grants and Additional Restrictions Grants which opened in April. Overall, the team has handled enquiries from over 500 businesses since the initial restrictions were announced in March 2020.

Freeports

Working as part of the Solent Freeport Consortium, the Council have successfully secured Freeport tax site status for Dunsbury Park as part of the Government's Freeports programme. Freeport Status represents a major boost to the profile of the Borough with an opportunity to secure further funding and investment. The next stage of the approval process is submission of an outline business case in the summer followed by a full business case in the autumn. Businesses locating within the freeport will benefit from a wide range of tax incentives to boost jobs growth, innovation and skills development locally. The Freeport programme is being co-ordinated by Solent LEP and the target is for Freeports to be operational by the end of 2021.

Advanced manufacturing and engineering (AME) project

Economic Development have commenced a new project looking into ways in which HBC can support AME businesses. Through recent engagement with businesses and business support organisations, four key themes have emerged:

- Land for expansion
- Financial support
- Mental Health and well-being support
- Trade Local and local supply chain development

Over the coming months, we will be looking at ways in which we can take a practical role to address these themes as part of our overall Economic Recovery programme.

Re-Opening High Streets Safely:

The retail consultancy project is progressing well. So far, the consultant has received 1,605 consumer responses and 108 business responses.

Kickstart Scheme

Building control are the first from Havant Borough Council to benefit from the new Kickstart Scheme. The scheme provides funded work placements for 16-24 year olds for 6 months. The scheme has provided Building Control to take on a new employee for 6 months on at very little cost to the Council. The process for applying to the Kickstart scheme is very simple and we are encouraging other teams to explore this scheme.

Supporting Young People into Employment

We have secured a £25k contribution from Solent LEP to employ a new skills and enterprise post from the LEP and the postholder will commence work in June 2021. The purpose of the post is to support 16-24 year olds into work with a strong focus on employer engagement.

Estates

Additional resources have been recruited into the Estates team in order to assist with high volume of work. Senior Estates surveyor started on 4th June and new Lead Estates Manager is due to start early August. Congratulations to Tom Clark passed his Assessment of Professional Competence and is now a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Rental arrears continue to be very low and rental recovery rates are very high with greater than 95% of rents recovered during Q1 2021. Recovery rate last year was greater than 99%.

The team continue to progress various transactional matters including rent reviews and lease renewals. Opportunities continue to be sought to reduce the Councils' liabilities.

Business Grants

The Government launched the new Restart Grant in April. To date we have made the following payments: -

Businesses 563 – total grants £3,926,058

We believe that around another 50 businesses could also claim the grant – although they were initially emailed in April. We will continue to make contact to increase take-up of this grant.

We have also continued to make payments under the Council's discretionary scheme – the Additional Restrictions Grant – we have made grant payments to 518 businesses, totalling £684,359 since April.

In total we have now paid nearly £2.4 million to over 600 businesses since November 2020 under the various Additional Restriction Grant schemes.

Traffic

The Traffic team are continuing to work on the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) programme agreed for 2021/2022. Councillors and other stakeholders are consulted on all proposed schemes before they are formally advertised to the public. It is important that all Councillors respond to these consultations as soon as possible so that comments can be considered at the appropriate time and unnecessary delays to the process can be avoided.

Civil Engineering and Landscape Team

Warblington Footbridge Feasibility – HBC CIL Funded

Progress continues, and an update report will be available shortly.

Havant Park – HBC Revenue Funded

Works to rebuild sections of flower bed walls has been ordered with Norse and now waiting completion.

Bushy Lease Cycle Route – HBC CIL Funded

Ecological surveys along the route commenced in May. We have received a response from Planning and Development regarding the mitigation that needs to be provided following the proposed felling of trees on the route.

Warblington Interchange Feasibility Study: HBC CIL Funded

The feasibility study to investigate the potential for implementing an A27 westbound jet lane from the A259 to assist traffic flow and improve safety as development in West Sussex results in additional traffic flow at this important junction. The final version of the report is being checked by HCC before sign-off, which is expected shortly.

Hobby Close, Waterlooville – drainage: CIL neighbourhood fund & WeBig Local

Portsmouth City Council are on site building the active play area. Once completed we will carry out the HBC elements of the project. The tender documentation is being drawn up with tender issue expected in April.

Scratchface Lane, Bedhampton recreation ground – unfunded / CIL

A land raising option to address significant seasonal drainage issues at this site is being finalised. We plan to resubmit a planning application, anticipating a start in 2022 so that the access and working impacts of the similar Hobby Close scheme (above) can be used as empirical evidence of the access arrangements.

Transforming Cities Fund – HCC / DfT Funded

The CELT team has been commissioned to assist HCC designing and implementing schemes along the east-west corridor through Havant town centre (and walking and cycling improvements in Elmleigh Road, Leigh Road, Eastern Road, Centenary Gardens and School Lane), along with bus stop improvements in Purbrook Way and Botley Drive. Preliminary design is now under way, with delivery on-site required by March 2023. Purbrook and Botley Bus stops preliminary design is completed, and high-level costings and assessments are now being developed.

Elmleigh Road, Havant Off road cycle route – HBC CIL / HCC / DfT Funded

The project has been included as part of the Transforming Cities Fund works. CELT has been commissioned to design this scheme and preliminary design is now well under way to create a segregated cycle track along Elmleigh Road from the east entrance of Havant College to the railway footbridge. Delivery on-site is planned for autumn / winter 2022/23.

Rusty Cutter Link Road congestion scheme –HBC CIL Funded

We are currently awaiting an application made by HCC for a designated funds scheme along the same route – the CIL scheme and the DE schemes are incompatible. The outcome is expected in the next month. Either the CIL scheme then proceeds to design and implementation over the next 12 months, or the CIL fund could be used as match funding for the DE scheme. Either way, it may be possible to implement the works in 2022.

Hayling Billy Trail waymarking – HCC Funded

Improved waymarking is to be introduced on the Trail. Hampshire County Council is funding this work, with CELT co-ordinating activity ‘on the ground’. A planning application for the three historic station signs is being determined at this month’s Planning Committee.

Jubilee Park Bowls Club drainage HBC Funded

The drainage has been installed and is working as designed, and the site is receiving its final reinstatement. The works are now complete aside from some minor reinstatement.

Jubilee Park, north drainage – HBC funded

Works are almost complete for phase 1 of this scheme to improve drainage around the pre-school building, with the creation of a new ditch system to distribute rainwater into the piped system. Phase 1 of the works are complete. Phase 2 of the works, a swale, are currently being programmed to be delivered this autumn.

Emsworth Town Centre Accessibility Feasibility Study - HCC Funded

We have received a Task Order to design and implement three items of work – a raised table in Victoria Road to improve safety around the school access, junction improvements at Bridge Road / Havant Road to improve safety for pedestrians crossing the bel mouth, and adjustments to the cycle lane layout near the petrol filling station west of Bridge Road.

Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – HCC Funded

HCC are leading on this project. Public consultation on the primary and secondary routes identified by HCC as part of Havant's TCF bid were put back until after the local elections in May. HBC will be asked to provide comments once consultation commences. A Sustrans' designed scheme arising from the LCWIP is being promoted as part of the government's Tranche 4 Covid recovery programme along the route between Petersfield Road / Wakefords Way, and the New Lane level crossing.

Milton Road Bus layby and Elettra Avenue HBC CIL Funded

Design is nearly complete. Once the design is approved, we will share it with Councillors and inform the public of the proposal for comment. It is then intended to tender the project in early summer.

Hambledon Road – HBC CIL & WCC Funded

The design is still ongoing but is expected to be completed by May. Design approval by HCC is required before sharing the project with Councillors and the public before going to tender Summer 2021.

Havant Rugby Football Club – HBC CIL Funded

Planning permission granted. Lighting works have been split from main bulk of scheme into separate scheme under different CIL pot. Designs completed, due to create work package and tender within next few weeks. Aim to be on site/completed September.

Hooks Row, Leigh Park Shared Path – HBC CIL Funded

Scheme near completion with small outstanding works required including signage and lining, awaiting HCC approval as within highway.

Havant Park Feasibility Project – HBC CIL Funded

CIL funded project to draw up a master plan incorporating all the future aspirations for Havant Park. The plan will illustrate what the park will look like in 20 years' time and show how the regeneration of the town centre and surrounding infrastructure will integrate into the park and enhance with the town centre. Draft feasibility is being drawn up for review with stake holders due for completion end of June 2021.

Harts Farm Way, Havant closure of layby HCC Funded

Design has been approved and will be out to tender in June. Implementation is expected in the summer.

Future Role of Hayling Route, Billy Trail

We continue to develop ideas and have contacted various stakeholders regarding the scheme. The results of the Study will be delivered by splitting the Billy Trail into geographic sections with (probably) different solutions for the various sections. CELT officers are in discussion with Coastal Partners team colleagues regarding an online version summarising the works for public consultation. The Study will need to deliver its findings in close conjunction with the outputs from other parallel and overlapping studies, these being the Hayling Island Coastal Strategy and the work by the Regeneration Team into use of the Trail as a route for Connected Autonomous Vehicles. Bearing in mind the need for this co-ordination, it is expected that a draft of the study will be available in the autumn but the full study not finalised until spring 2022.

Northney, Surface Water Drainage – HBC funded

Further surveys need to be undertaken to better assess opportunities and possibilities although the initial report is currently being drafted and opportunities being assessed. We expect to have final report and to be able to start bringing forward plans for this area in the late spring. Interim repairs to the tide flap, to secure the area against tidal flooding, are to be done first and these are being implemented by Coastal Partners in June. CELT will be overseeing these works on behalf of Coastal Partners. A survey is still needed to be undertaken before any further development of the report is taken further.

Emsworth, The Promenade - HBC Funded

Consultant's report is ready to be signed off. The report has identified initial repair works to be undertaken, some of which will be undertaken this financial year. Further works and more intrusive surveys have been identified in the report and these are to be undertaken over the next few years, funding permitting.

Hayling Island Access Improvements Phase 2 – HCC Funded

This phase covers the Hayling Park footpath upgrade, footpath 89 upgrade and footpath 102 resurfacing works. Tender documents have been reviewed by Hampshire County Council and sent out. Tenders returns were received at the end of May 2021 and expected construction start date to be end of June 2021.

Scratchface Lane Bridlepath Bedhampton – HCC Funded

The bridleway works were completed at the end of March 2021 and the works at Newbarn Road / Hulbert Road junction were completed by mid-April 2021.

Waterlooville to A3M Cycle Network Improvement Feasibility – HBC CIL Funded

Following review we have received additional comments which needs to be incorporated into the report. We now expect this to be available to local councillors for comment by the end of June.

Warblington Cemetery

A project to resolve issues with the drainage pipes at the Cemetery extension has been completed. Further work to the pumping station has been identified and this has been ordered from the same contractor (DynoRod) for implementation in June.

Bus Shelter replacements

We are looking to replace four bus shelters at St Alban's Road, St Clare's Avenue, Woolston Road and Calshot Road.