

Cabinet Lead for Levelling-Up – Councillor Tim Pike

- **Property & asset management**
 - **Property:**
 - A new Head of Property & Assets is due to join us on 6 March 2023. He is a Chartered Commercial Property Surveyor and RICS Registered Valuer, and has a wealth of experience from working in both the public and private sector.
 - The Business Case for a digital Property Asset Management System (PAMS) is due to be discussed at Cabinet on 15 March 2023.
 - Void rate continues to be very low across the portfolio with very few vacant and to let premises which is great news.
 - We now have increased capacity to complete deeds, licences, assignments, underletting, leases and renewals etc with the new Legal team in place. We have approximately 31 cases with Legal that we are now able to move forward which increases our rental income and protects our assets.
 - The team continue to identify and secure low value revenue opportunities such as rent reviews, licencing and concessions.
 - Identified and progressing additional car park sites for seasonal concessions to increase the offer to residents and visitors as well as increase income to HBC. This year there is a concession fee of £1,200 plus the tender per site.
 - **Land:**
 - Licences in place with the Environment Agency for defence of 12 homes in Lumley Road, Emsworth.
 - Licences in place with Southern Water and Portsmouth Water to start more bore hole testing in Havant connected to their ongoing projects.
 - Inspections on 709 HBC owned open space sites started by the team.
 - **Maintenance**
 - Urgent heating repairs completed at Leigh Park, Bedhampton and Springwood Community Centres.
 - Orders placed for Electrical installation inspections at Springwood and Waterloo Community Centres.
- **Capita & IT (December Performance)**
 - **Customer Services**

- We continue to see high levels of more complex, longer calls on Revenues and Benefits. Only 39% of calls were answered within 20 seconds, against a target of 80%. Workload compared to the pre-covid equivalent per month are 12% higher. Discussions are ongoing with regards to possible options that the Authorities may want to consider.
- **Land Charges**
 - achieved all monthly & quarterly performance indicators
- **Capita IT**
 - All performance indicators were achieved in recent months
- **Revenues and Benefits**
 - The Royal Mail (RM) strikes that are being experienced across the UK have had an impact on the R&B Team and the situation has continued. As RM is starting to catch up with its postal backlog we are seeing an increase in incoming correspondence. The current position nationally is that there are no further strike days confirmed but as the dispute is not yet resolved we will continue to monitor this.
 - Benefits performance against the monthly trajectory continues to look positive with New Claims processed in an average of 11 days and Changes in an average of 5 days.
 - Collection Rates in December were good and are ahead of both our estimated trajectory and last year's collection rates. We continue to treat the continuation of the positive trend with caution as it is against the backdrop of the cost-of-living crisis.
 - Department for Work and Pensions 'Household Support Scheme (3rd tranche)' funding levels have been confirmed, we are finalising the contract for the distribution of food vouchers and are due to go live shortly.
 - We are awaiting details from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the 'EBSS Alternative Funding Scheme'.
- **Digital services**
 - Agreed procurement route for new ICT Infrastructure and Security provider to HBC from Q2 2025, ensuring focus of resources to create the specification required for tender in 2023. Business case to come to Cabinet in Summer 2023.
 - Successfully retendered print, copy scan provision for HBC for April 2023 reducing our number of print devices to support building use changes at The Plaza and aim to reduce corporate paper use.
 - Developed and built a kiosk device for residents to use at The Plaza alongside Elections staff to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate to comply with the requirement for residents to provide photo ID when voting in May. The Kiosk is compliant

with Data Protection legislation and provides Elections staff with a portable, easy-to-use, and replaceable product that is available to help residents now. We will work with the Elections team to invest in a longer-term tablet version of this facility using Government funding.

- We have also added to the ability for residents to register to vote using the x4 Public Access PCs in the atrium. The facility is clearly marked on the PC homepage to encourage users to register.
- Added new functionality to the Corporate Office environment, including Microsoft FindTime to streamline organising meetings with external partners, the ability to use your landline or mobile to dial-in to any HBC Microsoft Teams meeting for audio-only participation, and doubled the wifi capacity in the Hurstwood Room to handle a twice the number of users who can connect to the Wifi network in that space at any one time.

Economic Development

Freeport – Dunsbury Tax Site

Dunsbury is the most advanced of the Freeport Tax-Sites with regard to immediate development and investment potential and there continues to be close liaison with Portsmouth City Council as landowner and developer. Currently:

- New units are under construction and should be completed in April.
- Increased levels of marketing activity planned, though some enquiries are coming in.
- In parallel we are finalising the process for administering the Business Rates Reliefs that potential occupiers may be entitled to.
- Further enhancements to the site planned utilising Government 'seed' funding, including a new cycleway – subject to approval by the Freeport.

In parallel, we have commenced early scoping work on our ambitions to develop a Skills & Innovation Centre that could be funded via the Freeport's use of retained business rates.

Business Support

The Solent LEP hosted a Business Support Clinic for Havant businesses in partnership with the Council on the 9th February.

As part of the approved investment plan for Havant Borough Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation, officers are currently in discussion with the Solent LEP about funding an enhanced level of support for businesses based in the Borough over the next two years. This will be very much targeted at small and medium-sized

enterprises with growth potential, supporting them to grow successfully and maximising economic and employment impact.

Havant Town Centre

Havant is one of the town centres that has been selected to receive fully funded support from the High Streets Task Force (HSTF). In the first instance this involves a diagnostic site visit and stakeholder workshop which would then be followed by tailored advice and support to meet particular local needs. This will take place on Thursday 16th March and detailed arrangements are currently in hand.

Civil Engineering and Landscape Team (CELT)

Please refer to my previous report for updates on the wide range of projects being delivered by the CELT Team.

Further meetings are being held with Ward Councillors where projects are reaching decision points. Recent meetings include the Scratchface Lane recreation ground.

Following the adoption by HCC of the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), we are working with County colleagues to prioritise our funding for walking and cycling improvements. Should any Councillors wish to be involved in the detailed discussions, please get in touch with me.