

**Leader of the Council – Councillor Alex Rennie**

- Policy development
- Lead for inter authority relations, engagement with Government, engagement with community and key stakeholders
- Council performance against corporate strategy
- Regeneration, including the Hayling Island Seafront Strategy
- Communications
- Armed Forces Covenant
- Economic Development and Levelling up Priorities

**Policy development, lead for inter authority relations, engagement with Government community and other key stakeholders.**

At the Cabinet in July we approved the corporate priorities plan which articulated our 16 corporate priorities that we are taking forward in order to delivery our Corporate Strategy. The corporate priorities have a direct relationship with the Corporate Strategy in that they articulate at a more detailed level exactly what will be delivered over the coming year. Each priority details the objective of what the priority is trying to achieve, the actions that will take place and the measurable output of that priority. We will be routinely reporting on progress of our corporate priorities as part of our quarterly performance monitoring from quarter two onwards.

We continue to closely monitor the latest development in central government policy to ensure we can effectively implement any opportunities that arise and that will help us to deliver our priorities.

Since the last meeting of the Full Council, we have continued with campaigns and launched new ones. Key campaigns and communications coverage have included:

- Swing, spin, rock, climb at Springwood Avenue play park
- Havant Borough Council invites business to apply for funding to transform empty shops in Waterlooville
- Win an Apple Macbook Air with Havant Borough Community Lottery
- Helping young people in the borough get into employment
- Mayor of Havant serves up free tennis taster sessions
- Havant Borough Council constrained in address Mill Pond and sea wall concerns
- Annual canvass launches in the borough
- Council invests in expertise to protect local ecology
- Dedication to making the borough better to be recognised with a new award
- Havant Borough Council join the collaboration to decarbonise the Solent region
- Parking initiative to support the vitality of Waterlooville town centre
- Council receives highest honour for its work supporting the Armed Forces community
- Extra car parking now available at West Beach

- Work starts on the latest playground refit at Springwood Avenue
- Start the school summer holidays off with free fun and ice cream
- Helping residents access safe housing through partnership
- Watersports enthusiasts asked to consider the safety of Hayling Island swimmers.

### **Council performance**

Following the end of Quarter One performance information has been collated and reported to Cabinet:

- An improved suite of Housing KPIs is now being reported which provide increased detail on temporary accommodation placements and Hampshire Home Choice waiting lists. The figures for Q1 indicate that pressure on the service remains high, with 5 households remaining in B&B for longer than the central government guideline of 6 weeks maximum. This reflects national trends (record numbers of households in temporary accommodation reached in March).
- Response times for information requests are all within target. There were 7 complaints upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman last financial year which is a significant increase from previous years (0 in 2019-20, 1 in 2020-21 and 2 in 2021-22). The Customer Service Focus Group will be looking at the details of these to identify any trends and further service improvements require.
- Vacancy rates and debt levels across investment property portfolio remain low. Further detail around the performance of the portfolio will be included in future reporting after the implementation of the property asset management system.
- The number of complaints received for Environmental Services is beginning to increase again, with 166 received in Q1 (increased from 120 in Q4 and 92 in Q3). However, there has been a reduction in complaints in the first month of Q2 as a result of work undertaken by the Client Team. We are working on improvements to the way complaints are recorded and reported to allow for increased oversight and analysis – a revised dashboard is coming soon.
- Planning decision metrics for almost all types of applications are within target, however the % of applications validated within 3 working days of receipt remains well below target, as does the % of discharge of conditions. The Planning team are looking at resourcing options to ensure these metrics are improved. Building Control metrics are all within target. No metrics are currently reported for the Environmental Health service – discussions with the service manager continue to find out what can be reported in the short term before the implementation of the Acolaid replacement system.

## **Regeneration**

### **Local Authority Housing Fund 1 and 2**

- The Council had provisionally been identified as eligible for capital grant funding of £706,000 (under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003) to provide a minimum of 5 houses for families from Afghanistan and Ukraine *who have a right to remain in the UK*. These houses must be delivered by 30 November 2023.
- On the 30<sup>th</sup> March the Council were awarded a total amount of £2.1m. The government then released a second tranche of funding in August 2023 whereby the Council have been awarded a further £1.4m. Bringing the total amount awarded to the Council in respect of the LAHF fund of £4.2m.
- The Council has completed a tender exercise for the acquiring agent and a preferred contractor has been identified.
- The invitation for the management of properties and tenancies has been released and a preferred supplier should be identified with an award of contract October 2023. The Council have carried out soft market testing and are comfortable that the Council will secure a contractor in line with its financial modelling.
- A report is coming forward to Full Council in September to request that the borrowing of up to £6m is approved to fund the acquisition of these properties.

### **Bulbeck Road multi storey car park**

Environmental site investigations have now completed, and analysis is underway started and are due to be completed September 2023.

We are also working with consultants on the financial viability of a residential development. It's key that before we go out to residents to consult that we are able to demonstrate that there is a reasonable expectation of a financially viable development at that site. This should be completed by early October 2023.

### **Havant Plaza Area**

The Council is working closely with various partners and at present regarding the Plaza site and the area around Market Parade and reviewing a programme plan, which is separated into workstreams.

In order to understand parking requirements, particularly around the Plaza area, LCR and HBC will be tendering for a car parking study with the plan this will commence very soon. Further communication to follow.

The Council have also met with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Horizon Leisure Trust in relation to options around the future siting of the Police Station and Leisure Centre and these talks are ongoing.

### **Waterlooville town centre**

Waterlooville continues to be an important priority for us and with the appointment of a dedicated Regeneration Officer to focus solely on the regeneration of the town centre and provide the capacity we need to accelerate progress. Work is currently underway with both short-term actions and the development of a Masterplan to guide longer term change.

We have recently launched the Waterlooville Vacant Shop Scheme with a 'Call for Projects'. This is a grant programme and £140,000 has been allocated from the UK Shared Prosperity fund. This will incentivise and minimise financial risk to businesses looking to take on vacant shop units and reduce the current high vacancy rates, increase footfall, support existing local businesses, and stabilise the current economic situation.

Work is continuing around the Parklet Grey to Green initiative in the Queens Parade section of the high street and surveys have begun with detailed costings and designs being currently worked on. £150,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy funds have been allocated to the project.

The Masterplan Invitation to Tender (ITT) has been launched with a deadline for submissions at noon on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023. We are currently working towards awarding the contract mid-October with a view to have the Masterplan published by Spring 2024.

### **Leigh Park**

The Council are continuing to support Portsmouth City Council with two developments in the Warren. These are the Cabbagefield Row development and the estate regeneration of Strouden Court, the Council's property team are liaising with the Portsmouth to identify some land for environmental mitigation purposes.

A consultation event organised by Portsmouth City Council, Party in the Warren which was held in the summer and was attended and supported by Havant Borough Council Councillors and Officers.

### **Armed Forces Covenant**

The MOD has invited Steve Jorden HBC CEO, the HBC Armed Forces lead officer and an HBC Reservist to attend the gold Employers Recognition Scheme (ERS) award ceremony on 5th October on board HMS Warrior in Portsmouth. The event will include a military display, a flypast, a bagpiper and refreshments.

## **Economic Development**

### **Link Up Leigh Park Programme**

#### *University of Portsmouth Research*

Regarding the insights this programme is building, the University of Portsmouth completed data collection in July. Partners involved in supporting participant recruitment were Park Community School, Havant Academy and Havant Youth Employment Hub. Groups engaged with were local organisations, businesses, residents aged 16-24 and their parents/guardians.

The team is now in the process of working on upcoming interim reports to share with partners, ahead of the final report that will summarise key findings from their research. This is due to be completed in early November 2023. Using the key findings, the plan will be to host intervention development workshops to design projects that will be delivered during the final year of the project.

#### *Link Up Leigh Park Coordinator*

In partnership with HSDC, the Link Up Leigh Park Coordinator is lined up to begin a mentoring programme that will work closely with school leavers from Park Community School. The 1-to-1 mentoring programme is due to commence in September 2023 with the aim of supporting a caseload of 15-20 Year 1s from Leigh Park. Elements of the programme will focus on targeted support working to reduce barriers these young people face to remain in post-16 education.

#### *'Move Towards' Bursary*

The programme has launched a bursary project, working closely with the Youth Hub during the final year, to support up to 60 young people at the hub move towards employment. The bursary will be used to support 16-24-year-olds with up-front costs, as well as reimbursements for expenses relating to transport, training, interview clothing, certification and those younger than 19 wishing to attend an adult course.

#### *Youth Forum*

The Youth Forum, being led by the Link Up Leigh Park project team, has now had three meetings. All meetings brought a small group of young people to the Plaza. At the most recent meeting, the group of young people were involved with shaping a mission, a vision and the values they would like group members to embrace as set-up continues to take shape.

A few of the members attended an Enterprise Day at the Youth Hub to develop skills in creativity, leadership, problem-solving and being a self-starter – key skills to becoming Ambassadors for our local area.

Two of the members will be attending the Youth Hub's first birthday celebration on 7<sup>th</sup> September to promote and recruit more young people to get involved in becoming local ambassadors.

The next forum meeting is due to take place in September 2023.

## **Havant Youth Hub**

### **Youth Hub**

The Youth Hub is currently supporting 187 young people from across the borough working closely with Havant and Cosham Job Centre.

To date, 115 young people have been supported into paid employment. Roles include construction, hospitality and a new communications apprentice at Havant Borough Council.

The Youth Hub celebrated its first birthday this month, an event was held for the service users and key partners as well as Alan Mak MP and the Lord Mayor.

### **New Partnerships – Multiply**

The youth hub has successfully secured a partnership with Hampshire County Council through Multiply funding to deliver maths functional skills qualifications.

Approximately 78% of the young people accessing the youth hub do not have their maths and English qualifications, so we are endeavouring to bring provision on site to encourage young people to access these qualifications.

The partnership will be piloted from September to December and support 15 young people to achieve their maths qualification. Many of these young people will then be able to go on to apply for apprenticeships and upskill further whilst earning.

### **Havant Business Growth Programme**

The Havant Business Growth Programme launches at the end of September and will support eight local small to medium businesses experiencing growth, who have been operating for over two years.

This programme is for two cohorts of eight, the second of which is also fully booked and due to start in January 2024.

By focussing on businesses with significant potential the programme is aiming to maximise impact on economic growth and job creation. Evaluation of this impact is an integral component of the programme that has been commissioned.

This programme is funded through Havant Borough Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and full details of the programme can be found here [Havant Business Growth Programme \(solentlep.org.uk\)](https://www.solentlep.org.uk)

### **Business Newsletter**

The first Havant Borough Council monthly Business Newsletter went out to Havant employers in August with a distribution list of 2,726 recipients. This is the first

Business Newsletter since the separation of Havant Borough Council and East Hants District Council.

It featured details of the Havant Business Growth Programme and how to apply, news about Innovate UK's funding for Unlocking Potential Award, Havant and South Down's College Digital Technology HN Flex Programme, announcing the date of the 2<sup>nd</sup> November for the first Havant Business Partnership event, and a request for businesses to complete a short survey to help the Economic Development team understand the needs of local employers more.