

Leader of the Council –**Councillor Alex Rennie****1. Policy development/lead for inter authority relations, engagement with Government, engagement with community and key stakeholders**

- 1.1. We continue to closely monitor the latest developments in central government policy to ensure we can effectively consider any opportunities that arise and will help us to deliver our priorities.
- 1.2. In early January 2024, Hampshire County Council launched their Future Services Consultation document which contained 13 cost savings proposals covering various services, some of which will have an impact on our services and our residents. A response has been drafted with input from across the Council and this will be sent to Hampshire before the consultation closes on 31 March 2024.
- 1.3. The budget for 2024-25 was approved at Full Council in February which committed funds for delivery of our Corporate Strategy over the next year. Proposals included:

Wellbeing

- Continued investment in our play parks with a further £339,000 for refurbishment of three play parks over the next 18 months.
- Freezing of fees on cost of hiring council owned sports pitches
- Supporting the development of Waterlooville Leisure Centre.

Pride in Place

- Extra funding (£50,000 extra) to fund our Climate Action Plan delivery.
- Investment in a further £100,000 in deployable and static CCTV.
- Funding to deliver numerous civil engineering programmes including improvement of active travel routes.

Growth

- £69m capital investment across the Borough over the next five years.
- Funds to improve our town centres such as delivering our Waterlooville Masterplan and vacant shops schemes in Waterlooville and Leigh Park.
- Havant Town Centre Bulbeck Road demolition funding.

2. Council performance against corporate strategy

2.1. Since the last report we have continued our work on delivering the corporate strategy priorities. Our Corporate Performance Scorecard is live on our website and captures progress against our 16 corporate priorities which will help us deliver our ambitions in our Corporate Strategy. We continue to make progress across our three Corporate Strategy themes of wellbeing, pride in place and growth.

2.2. Our key performance indicators are monitored and reviewed quarterly and included on our Corporate Performance Scorecard. The latest quarterly information included:

- Housing – a reduction of households placed in temporary accommodation although the average length of stay has increased
- Information Governance – response times for FOIs/EIR's all within performance target
- Environmental Services – a significant decrease in missed bins has been seen over the previous few quarters alongside consistently good performance for bulky waste collections
- Customer Services – a significant reduction in complaints down from 230 in Q1 to a 82 in Q3
- Planning – processing times for applications remains in target for most applications and we have now started to monitor pre-application processing times.

2.3. A link to our live dashboard can be found here: [Corporate performance scorecard | Havant Borough Council](#)

3. Regeneration, including the Hayling Island Seafront Strategy

3.1. Waterlooville Town Centre

- 3.2. The Council employed Feria Urbanism a consultancy practice to deliver a masterplan for Waterlooville Town Centre, the residents of Waterlooville and other stakeholders have reacted to this in a positive manner. The Council ran a series of walking tours that were attended by over 200 people, as well as engaging with local schools and colleges in the area. The next stage of the masterplan is an exhibition that brings together all the feedback plus the work carried out by the consultant team, this will take place at the old Game store on Waterlooville High Street from the 14th to the 16th March.
- 3.3 Following the exhibition a first draft of the Masterplan will be published and then work begins on incorporating this as a supplementary Planning document. The consultant team will also be publishing a quick wins report that will enable the Council, in a coherent manner, to introduce changes to the High Street to make it more attractive for shoppers, retailers and investors.
- 3.4 Meanwhile the Council have also designed a scheme to introduce colour to the High Street with lamp post banners that highlight the rich history of the area. Licences have been applied for from Hampshire County Council and we await their approval. A supplier has been selected and we plan to have these up by April 2024, subject to licencing.
- 3.5 The Waterlooville Vacant shop scheme will be relaunched in the next week or so. The Council are in final discussions with a couple of applicants and we hope to be able to announce the successful applicants shortly, meanwhile the scheme will be relaunched as not all the money from the £140,000 will have been spent in the first tranche.

3.6 Havant Town Centre

- 3.7 The Cabinet have now approved the demolition for Bulbeck Road car park to deliver much needed housing in the Borough and to remove a current hot spot for anti social behaviour. Council officers have started the planning application and a contractor has been selected to carry out the works. The team are also

devising an engagement plan to keep residents and other stakeholders up to date with the progress.

3.8 An agent has also been procured to help the Council market the site and work has begun on putting together a prospectus for the site.

3.9 In February the Council ran a workshop in the Spring Havant facilitated by the High Street Task force Professor Steve Millington. The workshop was well attended by Residents, Councillors and other local stakeholders. The workshop focussed on the physical things that a town can do to generate footfall to preserve the town centre. This is particularly pertinent for the newly formed Havant Town Centre Board who are due to meet for a second time in mid-March.

3.10 **Leigh Park**

3.11 The Council were successful in securing £120,000 from the One Public Estate fund that will allow it to carry out an options appraisals for the regeneration of Leigh Park that currently includes the Community Centre, Library, Apex Centre and NHS buildings. The hope is to come up with options for delivery of a regeneration of the site whilst still maintaining and enhancing the functions already delivered on site.

3.12 The Leigh Park Vacant shop scheme will be launched in March 2024, and this will allow local entrepreneurs to bid up to £150,000 to take on a vacant unit within the Leigh Park Vacant shop scheme zone which includes Park Parade and the Greywell shopping centre.

3.11 **Hayling Island**

3.12 Works will begin in March on a brand new and enhanced board walk and eating area at Chichester Avenue designed to help people with physical disabilities access the beach area with their families. Also the team have started to submit the planning application for a Changing Places public convenience in the same area which will have enhanced facilities for those people with physical disabilities.

- 3.13 The Council are in talks with the Owners of Inn on the Beach and Hayling Island golf course to come up with a engineering solution to stop the erosion at West Beach.
- 3.14 The team are also looking at a drainage solution and revised layout for parking at West Beach that will be approved Natural England and causes the least impact to the SSSI.

4. Communications

4.1. Significant engagement campaigns over the previous few months have included:

- Waterlooville Town Centre Masterplan engagement
- Housing Strategy consultation
- Play park engagement
- Havant Town Partnership Board meeting.

4.2. In addition to engagement work communications activity has been focussed around:

- Cabinet agreement regarding the demolition of Bulbeck Road carpark
- Statement of common ground on the medium-term future for sea defences at Mill Land and Wade Lane, Langstone
- Promoting the introduction of direct debit payments for long term parking permits
- Funding success for Leigh Park's community assets
- Approved budget for 2024-25

4.3. The website continues to be an essential tool for engagement with 144,000 visits last quarter compared to 64,000 visits this time last year.

5. Armed Forces Covenant

5.1. In December, a letter from Councillor Rennie was electronically sent to 2,700 local businesses encouraging them to follow in our footsteps and sign the Armed Forces Covenant. The letter explained how we actively show our commitment through our HR policies for staff, working with partners through the Stakeholder

group and our gold employers award. Havant Borough Council plan to re-sign the Covenant on Thursday 28th November at the Plaza.

The Havant Borough Armed Forces Stakeholder group continue to meet every 3 months. Key Armed Forces services, organisations, charities and Veteran groups are working closely together to share information and address key issues such as housing, employment, health and education.

The Armed Forces Staff Network group continue to meet face to face every 4 months. This is a support group for HBC officers who are linked to the Armed Forces Community, there are 11 members which include Veterans, spouses of serving personnel and a Reservist.

We continue to be a key member in various partnership meetings including the Southeast Regional Employer Engagement Group, the Solent Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Board and the Armed Forces lead group with other Councils across the south.

Achievements over the past year

HBC was successful in being awarded a gold Armed Forces ERS (Employers Recognition Scheme) award, this is the highest badge of honour an organisation can get

The Reservist leave HR policy now offers up to 15 paid days leave for training instead of 10 days. The Guaranteed Interview Scheme HR policy for Veterans has been reviewed and updated too.

6. Economic Development and Levelling up Priorities

6.1. Havant Borough Council were a Civic Sponsor of the Portsmouth & South Coast Business Week 19th – 23rd February and used this opportunity to connect with businesses across the borough where the Economic Development team outlined our business support offer and job matching service as well as outlining new initiatives being launched from April, such as the Youth Employment Scheme. Many businesses expressed how pleased they were to be visited by the team as it was the first time they had ever hosted a team from the council

Part of the week included 'Open Doors' where delegates from across the Solent were taken to visit businesses in Portsmouth, Fareham, and Havant. Future Water hosted the group in the afternoon and gave a presentation about the Havant Thicket Reservoir and how it links through skills to the local community and education establishments.

At the end of the week the Economic Development and Regeneration team hosted a Webinar outlining the ambitious plans for the next year and beyond. The Portsmouth & South Coast Business Week concluded with the The Portsmouth News Business Excellence awards night at the Guildhall where Horizon Leisure won Community Business of the year.

In March, Havant Borough Council are looking forward to hosting the next Havant Business Partnership networking event on the 14th March at Havant Horizon Leisure Centre in the evening.

6.2. Havant YouthHub

Achievements (End of JAN 24)

172 young people into paid employment

78% attendance for sessions during November

210 young people attended training (accredited and non accredited to upskill)

340 young people support in total

Partnership Updates January - February

Itchen College running a 6-week maths functional skills course from the Youth Hub over February and March to support 9 young people from the hub to achieve a numeracy qualification. HSDC will be providing 1-day Interpersonal Skills sessions to improve confidence and skills ahead of searching for jobs. They will be introduced to Leigh Park Learning Centre to encourage them to gain further qualifications and get a Level 1 Employability qualification from the course.

Widening Engagement and Participation We are working on a communications plan for 2024 to promote the youth hub service to organisations and the community to

increase incoming referrals. We currently have great success working with those 18-24 and are looking to focus effort into engaging with 16-17.

We have one event running throughout March:

- Digital Skills Bootcamp Tuesday 12th March 10.00-14.00
- Barratt Homes @ Youth Hub Mock Interviews; Wednesday 27th March 10:00-13:00

Digital Skills Bootcamps are flexible courses of up to 16 weeks for adults aged 19yrs or over and are aimed at delivering training co-designed with employers to respond to skills shortages. Digital skills are one of seven areas the Solent Partners are resourcing.

Barratt Homes collaborate regularly with the Youth Hub to offer employment support to the local community; they will be attending to mock interview 24 young people currently attending the youth hub to give them professional connections and build their confidence.

6.3. Link Up Leigh Park Programme

Milestones achieved:

- Phase 2 of the mentoring programme has started, in partnership with HSDC and Park Community School. A total of 16 pupils have been referred onto the mentoring programme with targeted support focusing on improving social and environmental challenges experienced with the goal to unlock potential to achieve meaningful GCSE outcomes to better prepare for further education and career trajectory.
- The programme has launched a funded work placement scheme to pilot with local businesses interested in offering paid placements to 18-24-year-olds from Leigh Park. There are four work placements available to offer paid experience to these young people for a 6-month period. The learning gained from this pilot scheme will feed into the rollout on a larger scale in a couple of months with 18-24-year-olds across Havant.

- Following the Intervention Development Workshop that took place at the end of 2023, the decision has been made to design and launch another two interventions to provide support to businesses. The first will focus on the development of a virtual 'central hub' that will connect businesses to training providers, recruitment and available support. The second will focus on supporting businesses to upskill and develop their staff, as well as consider best practice to support a younger workforce. This will be through offering a membership with Youth Employment UK where there will be access to a benchmarking tool, how-to guides and a wide network of like-minded businesses.