



A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 87/21

8 NOVEMBER 2021

The purpose of this Report is to request Member support for a proposed programme to increase awareness of the Town Council's central responses to date to the town's deprivation and build on that base.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) Deprivation within the town – typical of coastal towns nationwide – has been a focus for the Town Council's strategic and operational development since the publication of the government's Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010.
- b) Known as the IMD and published at regular intervals it divides England into 32,844 small areas called Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) of approximately 1,500 population of which there are 89 on the Island and Ventnor is made up of four of them.
- c) Information is routinely collected on each of them on the basis of Income, Employment, Education, Health, Crime, Living Environment and Barriers to Housing and Services as well as Income Deprivation Affecting Children and Income Deprivation Affecting Older People.
- d) On the basis of an overall score areas are then ranked from 1 as the most deprived to 32,844 as the least deprived.
- e) The latest Index, IMD2019, showed two of Ventnor's areas – Central Ventnor and Upper Ventnor – to be in the most deprived 20% nationally with the Central area in the most deprived 10% nationally on the Employment and Environment rankings and Upper Ventnor also in the most deprived 10% on the Education and Income Deprivation Affecting Children rankings.

2) RESPONSES

- a) The Town Council has responded positively to the challenge the serious deprivation faced by so many of the residents it represents
- b) Strong support has been made available through its Community Development Officer in particular in establishing and sustaining two vital local organisations: *Ventnor Food Bank* and *Baby Box*.
- c) It has funded the *Network* service on Thursday mornings at the Library providing advice on accessing Universal Credit and job searching for the last eight years and also more recently funds a very successful *Anxiety Café* as well as arranging for a range of *Advice Services* at its Green Room.
- d) The Town Council also supports the *Footprint Trust* with an annual grant for its staff to identify the needs of residents in fuel poverty and the purchases of mitigating equipment.
- e) When the Isle of Wight closed its *Youth Service* in 2015, the Town Council immediately set up a local service for the town's young people that soon became one of its regular services.
- f) *Boniface Fields* provides a beautiful open space with 30 new allotments, a Community Shed a rich biodiversity area and working artists.
- g) The Town Council has also accessed significant *external funding* for projects directed at these issues including most recently £24,000 of the Covid-related funds.

3) A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- a) It is part of the reality of areas of multiple deprivation that most are trapped in a downward spiral, and Ventnor's experience is no exception.
- b) The IMD began in 2007 and has been updated since in 2010, 2015 and 2019: in each of those three updatings both Ventnor Central and Upper Ventnor have been revealed as more deprived than in the previous Index.

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- c) Both austerity and Covid have increased the threats confronting many residents – individuals, families and children – in those areas in particular.
 - d) The staff team’s proposal for responding to this situation is a programme with the dual purposes of increasing Members’ awareness of the responses so far and identifying ways to accelerate and widen the Town Council’s response.
 - e) A draft of such a programme for Members to consider is a series of monthly meetings with those leading work in each of the areas, perhaps at 6pm on the third Monday of each month such as:

ISSUE	ACTIVITIES
POVERTY	Food Bank & Baby Box
SUPPORT	Anxiety Café & Network
YOUNG PEOPLE	Youth service
ENGAGEMENT	Boniface Fields
MEETING SPACES	Green Room
