



REGENERATION STRATEGY RESPONSE

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 85/18

10 SEPTEMBER 2018

The purpose of this Report is to ask Members to consider the attached draft for a response to the Isle of Wight Council's recently published Regeneration Strategy.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) In Minute 89/18 of its meeting of 13 August the Town Council unanimously agreed to provide a response to the Isle of Wight Council's Regeneration Strategy recently published for consultation and until 12 October.
 - b) A working group of the Clerk, Economic Development Officer and Councillors Tony Marvin, James Toogood, Billy Hill and Dave Logan was asked to prepare a draft response for this meeting.
 - c) The group met for two hours on Wednesday 29 August and its members have had the opportunity to comment on the Clerk's prepared draft circulated following that meeting.
 - d) A copy of the subsequently updated draft is attached to this Report.
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2) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:

- i) consider the draft response in the context of the Town Council's relationship with the Regeneration team and its programme; and
 - ii) agree its submission within the consultation process including any amendments or additions agreed at this meeting.
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VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL'S REGENERATION STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2018

This is Ventnor Town Council's response to the current consultation on the recently published draft Isle of Wight Council Regeneration Strategy as agreed at the Town Council Meeting of 10 September 2018.

Vision P19-21	Does this 'vision' adequately capture where the Island wants to be by 2030? If not, what is missing? What would your vision for the Island say?	<p>The Town Council recognises and supports the vision as expressed here, not least because of its roots in consultation. We are all aware of the tendency for vision statements to morph into wish lists and that is reflected in the fact that none of its elements, nor any item of its accompanying two Wordalls, are developments that would not be wanted.</p> <p>There is also a risk that the expressed key requirement (p21, para 1) <i>to generate income to sustain key services</i> may limit the vision's horizons. The missing ingredient, signalled by the fact that there is also nothing in the vision as stated or its accompanying Wordalls that would not be the case for almost every other local authority area in the country: there is nothing that 'speaks of', or looks to build on, the Island's distinctive features and opportunities.</p> <p>Although the division of the programme into its seven elements is both necessary and logical, there is a danger that the crucial interactions and interconnections between them are underplayed.</p>
Physical Regeneration P23-27 <i>Key actions</i> <i>P26/27</i>	Does this strategy adequately capture what we mean by 'Physical Regeneration'? If not, which areas should be further clarified?	<p>The wide coverage of the potential for physical regeneration is welcome, particularly the repeated commitments to <i>bring back derelict and redundant properties back into use</i> including <i>smaller pieces of land</i> (p26) as that fits well with the acknowledgement that 85% of Island businesses employ fewer than five people and, given the developments in on-line working and developments in AI, micro businesses are likely to be increasingly important for the Island's economic future.. We hope that this will include the use of the Authority's Compulsory Purchase powers where necessary.</p> <p>We would also like to see a linkage with the outcomes of the recently held consultation on an Environment Strategy for the Island as physical regeneration needs to incorporate those commitments and certainly not impact negatively on them..</p>
	Do the key actions seem achievable and deliverable? If not, which actions should further thought go into and why?	<p>We obviously welcome the inclusion of Ventnor Youth Club and Library in the Key actions for this section (p27) and would like to see the potential for the development of both affordable housing and small business units on the land behind the Island Free School in Upper Ventnor acknowledged here as well.</p>

	Thinking about you/your organisation/company/group/other, how can you help deliver on the ambitions set out for physical regeneration on the Island?	Our refurbishment and strategic development of Salisbury Gardens, now home for three public services – town council, police and health visitors – and 10 micro businesses with full occupancy is clearly an excellent example of the approach to regeneration adopted in this section of the Strategy and we look forward to future successes thanks to the Isle of Wight Council's commitment to partnership working with the old Ventnor Youth Club and Upper Ventnor Land sites.
Housing P29-33 <i>Key actions P33</i>	Does this strategy adequately capture what we mean by 'housing' and the 'housing' picture on the Isle of Wight? If not, which areas should be further clarified?	<p>Remarkably, the only apparent reference to second/holiday homes on the Island occurs in Appendix 1 in the section on the Area Regeneration Plan for East Medina (p65) and then only in relation to increasing council tax.</p> <p>Yet, as the useful recently published Housing Needs Assessment makes clear, they are of major significance for the Bay Area, including Ventnor: in our case the document quotes a local Estate Agent's view that around 60% of recent sales have involved second/holiday homes. We would like to see a commitment to a detailed, local area based quantification of the extent and trends in the development in second/holiday homes shared with town and parish councils.</p> <p>We would also like to see a study of the means adopted by other local authorities to restrict the continued spread of second/holiday homes and/or ways of providing priority for local residents.</p> <p>We very much welcome the significance given in this section to the need for affordable housing – again a need that that is particularly referenced for the Bay and Ventnor in the Housing Needs Assessment.</p>
	Do the key actions seem achievable and deliverable? If not, which actions should further thought go into and why?	<p>The listed key actions are all welcome although it is worth noting that the measures of success include an achievement figure (1,000) for the new units of affordable housing that is less than the key action identified for them and a quantification of 'substantial' would be welcome in respect of the proposed reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation here as well as in the Infrastructure section.</p> <p>It is a matter of concern in relation to the deliverability of the key actions that we understand that of the three Housing Associations currently active on the Island only Vectis Housing – the smallest - is committed to any new build provision.</p> <p>The commitment to an up-to-date, and much overdue, Housing Strategy is particularly important and we very much welcome the proposed inclusion of a locally relevant definition of affordable housing.</p>
	Thinking about you/your organisation/company/group/other, how can you help deliver on the ambitions set out for housing on the Island?	The Town Council is fully committed to deliver the opportunity provided by the Isle of Wight Council's openness to partnership working with us in respect of the two sites at Ventnor Central and the Land in Upper Ventnor which, if successful, could provide around 30 affordable housing units within the Plan period.

<p>Infrastructure P35-37</p> <p><i>Key actions P37</i></p>	<p>Does this strategy adequately capture what we mean by 'Infrastructure' and the 'Infrastructure' challenges on the Isle of Wight? If not, which areas should be further clarified?</p>	<p>The coverage of the physical aspects of infrastructure is encouraging but we would like to see references to what might be described as soft-infrastructure, including those services of health, adult social care and education as the extent of their provision and the standards they are assessed at are, and will remain, critical to the Island's ability to attract the businesses the Strategy is looking for, the residents it wants to attract and the consequent maintenance of those services. The issue is clearly evidenced by the acknowledged challenges in attracting staffing for them. Clarity about the consequences of the implementation of the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight STP and what those consequences are will be one of the critical elements.</p>
	<p>Do the key actions seem achievable and deliverable? If not, which actions should further thought go into and why?</p>	<p>The key actions are all supported. It would be helpful to include a specific reference to Southern Vectis as both the affordability and accessibility of our monopoly controlled and privately owned bus services are critical to the quality of life of many residents with the demand for them likely to increase as the demographic profiles predicted in the Plan come into play.</p> <p>We would also like to see better linkages between the bus, ferry and train services; for example by extending the facility provided by Island Line to buy tickets for ongoing mainland journeys back into bus services</p>
	<p>Thinking about you/your organisation/company/group/other, how can you help deliver on the ambitions set out in this chapter for improving infrastructure on the Island?</p>	<p>As all of the services referred to in this segment of the Plan are Island-wide and therefore clearly the responsibility of the Isle of Wight Council, there is little town and parish councils can bring to the delivery of the Key Actions for it, other than as effective vehicles for related consultation processes and comment.</p> <p>The measures of achievement listed here are less ambitious in both extent and measurability than in the preceding sections of the Plan.</p>
<p>Public Sector Assets as Pump Primers P39-42</p> <p><i>Key actions P41</i></p>	<p>Does this strategy adequately capture what we mean by 'using public sector assets as pump primers' on the Isle of Wight? If not, which areas should be further clarified?</p>	<p>The relative brevity of this segment appears to reflect a lack of clarity about precisely what the pump priming is intended to pump! It perhaps also reflects an awareness that the condition of some of 300 buildings owned by the Isle of Wight Council is not encouraging – all four the Town Council has been involved with in recent years – Winter Gardens, Coastal Centre, Youth Club and Library – had such serious (non)maintenance issues as to put their future in doubt. And progress with the One Public Estate (which the January Health and Wellbeing Board decided should be referred to as One Public Service) has made limited progress with what seems to be an organisationally defensive approach to partnership working.</p> <p>Even where a modern building is already in place, as with the Bay Community Hub, the planned activity for it within the My Life a Full Life programme is still well short of operational compliance with the proposals for them.</p> <p>There are also unresolved tensions between the need to secure value from the Assets for the Isle of Wight</p>

		Council's Budget and the commitment to encourage new approaches to public service and business enterprise that would often be better achieved by the release of those Assets to the localism agenda or the private sector.
	Do the key actions seem achievable and deliverable? If not, which actions should further thought go into and why?	<p>The key objectives are supported, not least in recognition of the issues of the <i>constrained development on the Island</i> identified in the final two paragraphs of page 39.</p> <p>The inclusion of an actual target for reduction in the number of families in temporary accommodation is welcome but all the other five bullet points lack any quantified targets.</p> <p>We very much welcome the declared willingness to transfer lower value assets to town and parish councils but are less comfortable with the unnecessary and inaccurate conflicting juxtaposition of capital disposal and revenue generation.</p>
	Thinking about you/your organisation/company/group/other, how can you help deliver on the ambitions set out for how we rationalise and use public sector assets on the Island?	<p>The Town Council will continue its established commitment to the partnership based development and delivery of the two public sector assets of Ventnor Youth Club and the land behind the Island Free School in Upper Ventnor.</p> <p>The Town Council's own Strategic Plan commits it to any and all collaborative opportunities for the development of the town's physical infrastructure and services.</p>
	Does this strategy adequately capture what we mean by 'Skills and business development' on the Isle of Wight? If not, which areas should be further clarified?	<p>It works well as an inventory of the necessary and desirable developments to stimulate and sustain the economic growth that is fundamental if the Island is to retain its uniqueness and sense of independent identity that are so important to it.</p> <p>But it seems to glide over the now known challenges to almost all of the identified commitments rather than acknowledge and engage with them. For example, recent reports from the Education Policy Institute rank the Island among the areas with the lowest percentage of teaching staff with degrees and find that the Island is among the areas least effective in closing the achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers – which is particularly relevant for Ventnor as it has two of the Island's 13 of the Island's lower super output areas within the most deprived 20% nationally.</p> <p>The Strategy would benefit from a clearer focus on the relationship between deprivation and regeneration given the importance of addressing the Island's continuing decline in the deprived lower super output area rankings as measured in the Index of Multiple Deprivation series.</p> <p>To take another example: the penultimate paragraph of page 48 commits to <i>the regeneration team will continue to support basic skill acquisition through the council's adult Education arm</i>, yet the budget for that section has been successively cut to the point of invisibility and there appears no likelihood, given the</p>

		<p>restriction to statutory services only, of any reversal of that trend.</p> <p>The establishment of a designated source of support and advice for small businesses in respect of planning issues such as change of use would be welcome.</p>
	Do the key actions seem achievable and deliverable? If not, which actions should further thought go into and why?	The change in this section, as in the preceding one, from the <i>Key Actions for 2018-30</i> section of the earlier segments to <i>What we are planning to do</i> seems significant. Its 15 bullet points do not contain a single measurable achievement and that is reflected in the omission – for the first time – of a <i>how will we know what we have achieved?</i> section.
	Thinking about you/your organisation/company/group/other, how can you help deliver on the ambitions set out for skills and business development on the Island?	The town council's Salisbury Gardens' Green Room area includes two modern, well equipped – including live streaming and video conferencing facilities – meeting rooms that we would welcome the opportunity to work with the Island's providers of basic, vocational and business management skills in developing their use as a South Wight and Bay Area facility; they could also usefully serve the local business community.
<p>Area Regeneration P51-55</p> <p><i>Key actions P55</i></p>	Does this strategy adequately capture what we mean by 'Area Regeneration' on the Isle of Wight? If not, which areas should be further clarified?	<p>We understand and support the logic of the Area Regeneration basis of the strategy both because it builds on and extends the implementation of the Localism Agenda – for which the devolution of services from the Isle of Wight Council to Town and Parish Councils has already established a firm base – and because their boundaries almost (even if not completely!) coincide with the Localities of the My Life a Full Life programme..</p> <p>It would be helpful to know whether the inclusion of Ventnor in the Bay area will also be reproduced in the new Island Plan instead of the town's status as one of two distinct Small Regeneration Areas in the current one. If that is the case, it would important for us that the recognition in the current designation of the town's particular challenges for economic development is retained in both the new Island Plan and the new Regeneration Plan.</p>
	Do the key actions seem achievable and deliverable? If not, which actions should further thought go into and why?	<p>All the Key Actions identified in this section are fully supported and the commitment to quality and regularly updated area-based data is particularly welcomed.</p> <p>However, here too the absence of a <i>How will be know we have achieved this</i> section could usefully be remedied. And the commitment in the last bullet point of the Key Actions section to support only five projects per area over the whole of the 12-year term appears unambitious, to put it mildly!</p>
	Thinking about you/your organisation/company/group/other, how can o regeneration at an area level on the	The town council's development and leadership of the South Wight Parishes Health and Wellbeing Forum within, and funded to date by, the My Life a Full Life programme has provided us with an established framework of connections with the other 12 town and parish councils in the South Wight Locality. A

	Island?	<p>proposal for building on that basis is outlined in the next section.</p> <p>Our staff team has substantial experience of and expertise in the collection, interpretation and sharing of data related to our responsibilities as well as eight years' experience of community development activity that included full engagement with the initial round of the Department for Communities and Local Government's <i>Our Place</i> programme.</p>
Communications, Engagement and Partnership Working	Does this strategy set out a clear picture of how important engagement is in delivering on the ambitions? If not, what should the strategy say about engagement to ensure it is clear how important this is?	When the section which opens with the statement that it is <i>probably the most crucial element of delivering this strategy</i> turns out to be the shortest by far, lacks any identified Key Actions within the Plan period and includes no tests by which success will be measured, it leaves the sense that the document's authors ran out of steam! The claim is about its priority is arguably overstated, but it is highly significant and merits more detailed exposition.
	How do you currently engage in the regeneration conversations?	<p>The Town Council has had an engagement with the range of public agencies delivering the services essential to addressing the town's deprivation since its adoption of regeneration as a major priority through a series of breakfast meetings in 2011. Those relationships have been maintained through our participation in the Our Place programme and the development of the town council's own strategic plan.</p> <p>The town council has identified its priority sites for regeneration and engaged fully in relationships with related agencies including, and particularly, with the Isle of Wight Council.</p>
	How would you like to be involved/engaged/informed?	<p>A model for engagement with this Plan is provided by the town council's development of the South Wight Parishes Health and Wellbeing Forum. This is a meeting that takes place every six weeks of appointed representatives from each of the South Wight Locality's town and parish councils which senior lead officers across the whole range of the Island's Health, Adult Social Care and Wellbeing services attend to outline their role and discuss their activities and development plans.</p> <p>The outcomes are well informed town and parish council representatives reporting back to their own councils and raising and exploring issues of concern with the areas of their councils.</p> <p>We would welcome the commitment of the regeneration team, and its partners, to support a matching, perhaps quarterly, Forum for the Bay Area of this Strategy based on representatives of each of the involved town and parish councils sharing, contributing to and monitoring the development and implementation of the Plan as well as ensuring that all the area's town and parish councils kept fully informed.</p> <p>The recognition within this draft for the Strategy of the significant role for town and parish councils is very welcome indeed, as is the approach to their role within the Island's future adopted by the Leader of the Isle of Wight Council and his colleagues.</p>