



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR REGENERATION, PLANNING, HOUSING AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Date and time	THURSDAY, 3 MAY 2018 COMMENCING AT 5.00PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Tig Outlaw (Chairman), Debbie Andre, Michael Beston, Andrew Garratt, Michael Lilley, Chris Quirk, Brian Tyndall
Cabinet Members Present	Cllrs John Hobart, Dave Stewart, Ian Ward, Wayne Whittle
Officers present	Chris Ashman, Marie Bartlett, Wendy Perera, Paul Thistlewood,
Stakeholders Present	Jamie Brenchley (Salvation Army), Simon Dabell (Visit IW), Phil Dominey (South Western Railway), Jane lee (South Western Railway), Will Myles (Visit IW), James Smith (South Western Railway), Liz Vesty (South Western Railway)

25. [Minutes](#)

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [1 February 2018](#) be confirmed.

26. [Declarations of Interest](#)

Councillor Chris Quirk declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number 27 (Island Line) as he was a member of the campaign to keep Island Line.

27. [Island Line](#)

The Committee was advised that a steering group had been set up which included the Cabinet Member, other councillors, officers Department for Transport and Network Rail who have been scrutinising details of the proposed solution to the future of the Island's railway service. A proposal that would enable Island Line to become a sustainable service going forward was due to be submitted by 31 May 2018.

A consultation was undertaken and views expressed had been incorporated into the emerging plan for the line. A comparison with other branch lines such as Devon and Cornwall was undertaken as they seemed to have

increased passenger numbers year on year. It was noted that the passenger numbers on Island line had decreased.

Improvements to the timetable had been considered. If a new passing point was created at Brading then it would be possible to run three trains which would be sustainable. However the current fleet was not sustainable and it was becoming increasingly difficult and costly to maintain them.

Newer trains would be purchased which would better the passenger experience. An expert engineer had advised on the current track and how to improve the ride for passengers. A series of maintenance works in the winter of 2019/20 was proposed.

Ticket purchasing was considered and initiatives had been proposed. A season ticket was mentioned for school children which could be purchased in advance.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the pier and the height of the newer trains as there had been issues previously with them fitting under some of the tunnel and bridges. They were advised that Network Rail had a detailed report made of the pier and a favourite option had been put forward. It was envisaged that Island line would only require one of the two lines that currently available on the pier. Discussions with the Department for Transport looked encouraging.

Technical studies had been completed and it was discovered that the tunnel was high enough for the new fleet although there were one or two places where there may be minor issues. Provision for work to ensure the new fleet fitted was being included in the costings of the purchase.

The Head of Place advised that a meeting of the infrastructure task force working group to look at the potential interchange in Ryde had been scheduled in the next few weeks to discuss working together.

It was acknowledged that a large number of new housing had been approved in the Ryde area and this had been considered when discussing future proposals for the location of a new station facility possibly linking in with the steam railway. Too many stations would slow the journey down.

The Chairman thanked representatives of South Western Railways for attending and providing a useful overview. He believed that it would be appropriate for the committee to digest the content of the overview before being in a position to provide a formal view.

RESOLVED:

- i. THAT the update be noted
- ii. THAT the Chairman be authorised, following consultation with fellow members of the committee, to submit comments to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport on the proposals for the development of the Island railway system.

28. [Visit Isle of Wight](#)

The Managing Director and Chairman from Visit IW advised the Committee that 2.3 million people visited the Island in the last six years. An estimated 300,000 have come via yachts to the marinas around the island though no work had been done on this area since 2003. It was believed that 1.4 million of those stayed on the Island, the rest were understood to be day trips.

2017 was a disappointing year as a 9% drop in total visitor numbers had been seen, compared to competitors across the UK. The south of England as a whole saw an 11-14% decline in numbers. It was thought that the weather had an impact on visitors. Bookings for holidays were now done a few weeks before the trip rather than months in advance.

Visitors staying on the Island for five nights or more was in decline. This was believed to be because people wanted more shorter breaks each year. 65% of people no longer stayed in serviced accommodation.

Visit IW operated to the D- bid proposal which aimed to get new people to the Island who hadn't visited or been to the Island in a number of years. A 19% increase in these visitors had been seen. 90% of new visitors were likely to keep coming back after the first visit.

An annual consultation had been undertaken and looked at making changes to the marketing plans for 2018. Quarter one figures were awaited although it was noted that the weather may have affected visitor numbers.

A post Easter marketing campaign had commenced with various advertisements had been distributed to national rail stations on the mainland. These contained information regarding activities and businesses on the Island such as Tapnell Farm and B&B's. It was hoped that this campaign would encourage more visitors to the Island.

In 2017 the Island saw a boost in the number of visitors following the Victoria and Abdul film that had been released. It was noted that a review of the Visit IW would be undertaken to ensure that it was fit for purpose.

The Committee asked what the future of Visit IW was past the 5 year initiative in 2020. They were advised that this was under discussion although if they agreed to put in another bid work would have to commence as soon as 2019. At the moment Visit IW was concentrating on delivering what they said they would do in the original bid.

Concern was raised that a conference centre had been omitted from the submitted plans for the proposed development at Norris Castle, East Cowes which had previously been discussed. The need for improved facilities was highlighted and the Council should encourage such development.

Links to arts and heritage places on the Island were considered important although it was essential that those areas were carefully maintained. Work with Ryde Business Association to find ways to encourage visitors to stay in

Ryde and not use it as a route to go somewhere else was another initiative. The Committee raised a question regarding Newport and how the Parish Council could become involved. It was acknowledged that working together was key and had to be the way forward for the Island.

It was noted that 6% of visitors were non UK residents and therefore there was not seen to be a high impact on visitor numbers following Brexit.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Regeneration team should explore what assistance it can offer to the proposal to develop a conference hotel facility at the Norris Castle site.

29. **Homelessness**

Jamie Brenchley from the Salvation Army advised the Committee that the Salvation Army had approached the Local Authority to put forward a proposal for winter provision for the homeless. Based on data and feedback of the scheme it had worked well.

The Committee congratulated the Salvation Army and the work that it had been undertaken during the winter and hoped that it would continue in the future. Instances had been identified where they were unable to help as there was not a one size fits all solution

Discussions took place regarding homeless providers across the island such as the bus shelter and how actual demand and requirements should be met. There was concern regarding emergency accommodation and the need for support during the day. It was explained that providers had been competitive in the past and they would investigate what services was needed.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Isle of Wight Council and Salvation Army had worked well together. Other organisations would be able to bid for pockets of money and meetings had taken place with the relevant directors on joint working.

It was noted that provision needed to be available across the island as some people would not travel to the main towns.

RESOLVED:

- i. THAT a report be submitted to next meeting on proposals to review and update the councils existing but out of date homelessness strategy in light of recent experience.
- ii. THAT the recommendations made in the Isle of Wight Salvation Army winter shelter report should be considered as part of the review of the Strategy by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing.

30. **Regeneration**

The Director for Regeneration advised the Committee that the 2017/18 underspend would be carried forward to continue to support projects as they would span financial years.

The Committee asked if a timeline for the proposed projects had been produced so that they were able to see when the project would be completed. They were informed that an action plan was available and it would be provided to the Committee. Individual project plans had also been kept updated and a regeneration strategy was being drafted.

The Committee asked if there was any assistance needed in pushing some of the schemes through to enable commencement as delivery of these projects was important to the regeneration of the island.

Concern was raised regarding recent public meeting which had been held in Ryde. The Director of Regeneration had been encouraged by the number of people who attended the event and welcomed the feedback provided.

RESOLVED:

- i. THAT the report be noted
- ii. THAT a detailed report on the progress of the delivery of the regeneration project be submitted to the next meeting

31. **Future of the Isle of Wight's Records and Archives**

The Cabinet Member advised that a meeting had taken place with representatives from the National Archive to establish the progress being made towards the provision of a records office facility meeting necessary requirements.

A feasibility study had been requested in the next 3-6 months on establishing a record office to meet the standards. A new site had been investigated which would be shared with the National Archive. The current building was considered to be included within the plans for the regeneration of Newport Harbour.

The National Archives had continued to support the Local Authority and an updated project plan would be submitted to them prior to the completion of a feasibility study. This would enable them to review and make comments.

RESOLVED:

- i. THAT the report be noted
- ii. THAT the committee were pleased with the progress and looked forward to seeing the feasibility study

32. **Cabinet Member Update**

There were no cabinet member updates as significant issues had already been covered during the meeting.

CHAIRMAN