



Minutes

Name of meeting	CABINET
Date and Time	THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs L Peacey-Wilcox (Chairman), D Andre, J Bacon, P Fuller, J Jones-Evans, P Jordan and K Lucioni
Also Present	Cllr G Brodie Sharon Betts, Laura Gaudion, Wendy Perera and Christopher Potter
Also Present (Virtual)	Cllr C Critchison Dawn Lang, Colin Rowland and Claire Shand
Apologies	Cllr I Stephens

123. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 be approved.

124. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Jordan declared an interest in the item relating to the Better Care Fund (minute number 129a) as he was involved in care delivery on the island.

Cllr Lucioni declared an interest in the item relating to the Enhanced Bus Partnership Plan (minute number 132b) as her son worked for the local bus company.

125. **Public Question Time - Maximum 15 Minutes for Written Questions and 15 Minutes for Oral Questions**

A written question was received from Simon Richards (PQ 38-23) relating to school place planning. The Leader provided a response.

126. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman reported that the HR and Learning Development Teams were working together to develop a case study for the Age Friendly initiative. One in five apprentices at the council were aged 50 or over.

£3.1 million had been received from the UK Government Youth Investment Fund to develop the former Sandown Town Hall for youth services. Local suppliers and contractors would be used where possible.

Newport library had reopened after a six-month period of limited service.

The winter vaccination programme was being promoted.

Evidence in relation to fair funding for the Island Deal had been submitted to the government. Minister Lee Rowley was to visit the island within the coming weeks.

Connectivity was to be included in the agenda for the next Islands Forum meeting.

127. **Report of the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships**

127a **Children's Services - Future Arrangements**

The Appointments and Employment Committee had recently agreed to recruit a new Director of Children's Services for the island. The report had been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, who had endorsed the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

To agree to the termination of the current partnership agreement with effect from 31 January 2024 returning the overall leadership and management of all Children's services functions, including education, in-house, with arrangements for 'buy-back' of specialist service support/provision where there is a cost-benefit for a minimum period of twelve months.

128. **Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Climate Change and Biosphere**

128a **QPMR Q1 - 2023-24**

Some potential savings of £1.6 million had been identified which would ease the budget pressures. £2.4 million of additional income had been achieved in the previous year and placed into reserves for the current year which would bring greater resilience.

The Chief Executive of SSEN would be using the Island as an important test case for green energy, including an additional interconnector worth £55 million which would help with future proofing and contribute to net zero.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had requested some further details be added to future QPM reports in relation to housing.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approves the Performance Report for the Quarter ended 30 June 2023, and the priority report detail as set out in appendices 1-12.

129. **Report of the Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Housing, Public Health and Homelessness**

129a **Better Care Fund 2023-2025**

This was the annual paper which listed the current allocation of funding. It was noted that it was to cover a two-year period. The recommendation included the provision of delegated authority for the Director to make any amendments to the plan, although it was hoped that amendments would not be necessary.

Having declared an interest in this item, Cllr Jordan abstained from voting.

That the cabinet note the 2022/2023 BCF End of Year submission and approve the BCF 2023-2025 BCF submission.

That the cabinet delegate authority to the Director for Adult Social Care and Housing Needs the authority on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Housing, Public Health and Homelessness Needs to further develop and submit the BCF 2023 – 2025 templates in line with the national deadlines, and make amendments to the allocations and provision of services within the BCF during its 2 year period.

130. **Report of the Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal Protection and Flooding**

131. **Housing Affordability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

The document was intended to be a step towards the Island Planning Strategy. Affordable housing was in demand, and it was believed that the adoption of the SPD would help towards addressing the issue. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the recommendation but had made some relevant points regarding transient residents coming to the island. This would be looked at further.

RESOLVED:

That the 'Housing Affordability Supplementary Planning Document' as at Appendix 1 to this report be formally adopted; and

That any final editorial and presentational changes to the supplementary planning document are delegated to the Strategic Manager for Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Planning, Coastal Protection & Flooding and Adult Services & Housing, Public Health & Homelessness. These changes will not alter

the meaning of the document and will be restricted to grammatical, presentational and typographical errors.

132. Report of the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy

132a Adoption of EV Chargepoint Infrastructure Strategy

The strategy was a living document. Delivery of the strategy was being funded via Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund of £1.6 million capital funding. Highways were working on a solution to charging infrastructure for residents who have no off-road parking, and how to match the number of charge points to match demand on the island.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approves the draft EVCI Strategy.

132b Local Bus Service Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme

The report was taken as read and not discussed in detail. Small amounts of money were being received which would be used to improve services in some way.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approves the Isle of Wight Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan) and Isle of Wight Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EP Scheme), as detailed within, and appended to this report, as the local response to “Bus Back Better”, the national bus strategy, building on the Isle of Wight Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) that was approved in October 2021.

Furthermore, that authority is given to formally ‘make’ the EP Plan and EP Scheme in line with Government guidance, to include establishing the governance structure for the Enhanced Partnership.

133. Cabinet Member Announcements

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Lifelong Skills reported that the service was in a transitional phase with the ending of the partnership with Hampshire in the near future. Several initiatives were moving forward with the opening of the new family centre in Sandown, and the adult education programme, some of which was available for free, was detailed on the council’s website. The matter of surplus school places would be addressed to ensure a high level of service.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Climate Change and Biosphere thanked the Leader for all she had done whilst Leader of the council.

The planning committee had recently given planning approval for two solar farms on the island.

There was a new decision-making tool available to assist with assessing the likely impact of decisions on the climate and biosphere.

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal Protection and Flooding reported that, in relation to Planning matters, discussions were ongoing with Town and Parish Councils regarding enforcement in their areas. The decision notice for the Worsley in Wroxall had now been completed. Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council had been instrumental in the restoration of two key properties in Newport High Street.

A total of 487 units had been granted planning permission in the past year, which was just over the figure contained in the Draft IPS.

The Government had issued the NPPF which failed to recognise the exceptional circumstances for islands.

In relation to Coastal protection, Ventnor Coastal Protection Scheme was ahead of schedule.

Seaview slipway had been restored.

The council would be working with the Environment Agency to work on the consultation for Yarmouth and Shanklin coastal protection issues.

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure reported that the Director of Regeneration had left the council, along with other members of the regeneration team.

A new species of dinosaur had been found and it was hoped that the remains would be displayed at Dinosaur Isle on the October Half Term.

Funding had been applied for to upgrade the museum.

The number of One Card memberships had increased and was now at 86% of pre-pandemic numbers.

New facilities and equipment had been installed at the heights and Medina Leisure centres.

The Solent Local Enterprise partnership were working on a cultural strategy for the Solent area. Businesses could obtain free mentoring via the SLEP.

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy reported that contractual challenges were being faced with the Highways PFI. Legal advice had been sought in some cases.

The floating bridge dispute had concluded and improvements to the vessel were now in hand.

The Local Transport Plan had been delayed pending government guidance.

The Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Waste, Community Protection and ICT reported that 98% of household waste was now being diverted from landfill. There had been less than 20 missed collections per 100,000. Same-day bookings for the tip should be live within the next few months.

There was ongoing work with Regulatory Services regarding the underage sales of vapes.

Ryde and Cowes police were looking to have an open desk in the near future. The work of the Fire and Police cadets and the Prince's Trust were commended for their work with young people and the Cabinet Member was looking forward to an observation day with the police rapid response team.

134. Consideration of the Forward Plan

The contents of the Forward Plan were noted.

A call-in request had been received regarding the delegated decision for the lease of Browns Golf Course. The client department and legal department had been consulted and it was hoped that the issue would be resolved quite soon.

It was noted that a Cyber Security Strategy would be coming forward in the near future, and a report on securing the future of the Fairway Athletics track.

135. Members' Question Time

Written questions had been received from Cllr Brading (MQ 06/23) relating to the ending of the Children's Services partnership, and Cllr Lilley (MQ 07/23) regarding PTEC. A response to both questions was given by the Leader.

Cllr Brodie said that it was disappointing that all the achievements of the Cabinet had only been heard by those present at the meeting and asked what could be done to turn round the apparent negativity towards the council, especially within the media.

Cllr Fuller explained that in a recent planning consultation only 27 people had responded from thousands, and that he found personal engagement with residents beneficial.

The Leader responded that the council's facebook page is used to inform the public, but that consideration would be given to using radio broadcast more so that people would hear of the council's achievements whilst going about their daily business.

Cllr Bacon had recently carried out an interview with Vectis Radio.

CHAIRMAN



Public Question time

To view any public questions that were put to this committee, they will be listed as an additional PDF document below the public question time section within the online minutes, an example is displayed below:

32. [Public Question Time](#) PDF 87 KB

Questions must be delivered in writing
later than 5pm on Friday, 15 January 20

Additional documents:

- [PQ 11-21](#)  PDF 85 KB
- [PQ 12-21](#)  PDF 90 KB

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Cabinet – 14 September 2023**Written question from Simon Richards to the Leader**

I welcome the reference in item 6, the Report from the Cabinet Member for Finance, Climate Change & Biosphere, to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. I wish to draw Cabinet's attention to Article 3 of the Convention which places a duty to consider the best interests of the child as a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. As it has been evidenced by council officers, headteachers and chairs of governors that reducing the excessive surplus of school places in our primary schools is in the best interests of children, what is the timetable for taking action on this issue?

Response

We have a problem.

We have too many empty children's spaces in our schools. This is impacting on our island children's education in many ways, financially; teacher recruitment, retention and training; SEN provision; the ability to deliver a full broad-based curriculum.

Schools are mostly funded on the basis of how full they are.

Where there are fewer pupils than places then schools do not get the full amount of money they need to do their job.

The School Funding system needs to change.

However we don't know if or when that will happen, therefore we need to look at ways to effectively manage the empty spaces issue for the benefit of our island families now. Inevitably, this will involve the closure of some schools.

This is not an easy course to take.

In particular it relies on information and understanding and a consideration and, if necessary, an acceptance that there is no other alternative.

Earlier this year it was proposed we take such a route but that came about without the public having sufficient information and an understanding of the problem.

As a result we stepped back to allow time to work with everyone concerned to be able to understand fully the rationale behind the proposed consultations to close.

The unfortunate timing of a review of the partnership with Hampshire County Council for the provision of Childrens Services resulted in a decision by Hampshire County Councillors not to continue as they needed to focus on Hampshire children.

It has been made clear by senior officers that we cannot manage the transition away from the partnership and proceed with the school place planning process at the same time.

It is imperative that we sort out the management of Childrens Services and this process is already underway.

This gives us the opportunity, in respect of school place planning, to provide information and develop understanding of the situation and to explore any possible alternatives to a process of closure that might exist and to do that with stakeholders, including teachers, parents and communities.

Therefore, as indicated earlier this summer, we will now commence an informal all Island process for the next 4 months to engage with and listen to you, our residents, before potentially moving to a formal process once we have our new management arrangements in place in 2024.

No schools shall be named for possible closure until that time, but we cannot rule out at this stage the possibility of there being some school closures.

In the meantime we will ensure that sound financial support and advice for schools continues to be provided and we will work with headteachers and parents to achieve this.

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Member Question time of the Leader


To view any Member questions that were put to the Leader, they will be listed as an additional PDF document below the Member question time of the Leader section within the online minutes, an example is displayed below:

29. Member Question Time of the Leader

- [View the background to item 29.](#)

A question must be submitted in writing on 17 November 2020.

Additional documents:

- [MQ - 15/20](#)  PDF 96 KB

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Cabinet – 14 September 2023**Written question from Cllr Paul Brading to the Leader**

Would the leader publicly acknowledge the excellent work that Hampshire Country Council have done for the island over the term of our partnership, some 11 years, and that she is disappointed that the successful partnership is coming to an end?

Response

“I agree that we have benefitted from a long and supportive partnership with Hampshire County Council, working together to improve services for children and to create a sustainable service. Our success is largely due to the dedication and support of all those who work with our children and young people both staff, councillors and those in our communities — and I thank them wholeheartedly for their support.

“The partnership has evolved over the years and whilst I recognise that many will be disappointed that it is coming to an end, this was not a decision for the IWC alone. We are now looking to the future with renewed resilience, strength and good support for local children and families. We will continue to work closely with colleagues across the water over the next few weeks and months in considering the proposals.”

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Cabinet – 14 September 2023

Written question from Cllr M Lilley to the Leader

What is the current financial position and progress of PTEC – Tidal Wave project in light of PTEC/Orbital appearing not to have bid in Government's CfD Round 5?

Response

The IWC are a minority shareholder in PTEC and have no formal role in the investment or other decisions of the company. The council have approached PTEC for a response to the question raised and have received the following response:

“PTEC is in the process of seeking further investment for the next stage of development, which will see the project reach financial close. We are in discussions with a number of funders as well as large energy companies whose interest potentially extends to power purchase agreements. We intend to bid into CfD allocation round 6 next year.

The project remains fully consented with a grid connection offer and seabed lease in place. The next step is to discharge the consent conditions and finalise the engineering, procurement and construction plans which will involve engagement with UK, Solent and Isle of Wight based suppliers.”

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