



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION
Date and Time	THURSDAY 5 OCTOBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs N Stuart (Chairman), J Lever (Vice-Chairman), K Love, C Quirk and I Ward
Also Present (Non voting)	Cllrs D Andre, P Fuller, J Jones Evans, P Jordan, I Stephens, P Spink (virtual)
Officers Present	Oliver Boulter, Natasha Dix, Colin Rowland, Melanie White, Laura Gaudion, Sharon Betts and Sarah Teague
Apologies	Cllrs M Beston

13. **Apologies and Changes in Membership (if any)**

Apologies were received from Cllr Beston.

14. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2023 be approved.

15. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest at this stage.

16. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

No public questions were received.

17. **Progress on outcomes and recommendations from previous meetings**

Members were advised that testing was currently underway at the Energy from Waste plant, and that an open day would be held for members prior to opening to the public, hopefully in the autumn.

Since its approval at Cabinet in July, the Acquisition Strategy had been updated, following recommendations from the Committee.

It was requested that detailed outcomes, figures and information were provided to the Committee as soon as possible. The Deputy Leader would seek an update from the Housing Manager at the earliest opportunity.

18. Pre-Decision Scrutiny - Draft Island Planning Strategy

Members were frustrated that the government had delayed the NPPF as they were keen to have the DIPS considered by Full Council. It was reported that approximately 50 other areas had held back on their Planning Strategies pending the government guidance. The number of units for the island had been brought down to 453 and the council would wish to use 'special circumstances' to justify the lower number.

Members were keen to have sight of the draft Strategy in good time prior to Cabinet and Full Council in January. As the next scheduled meeting of the Committee was not until 4 January, it was felt that an additional meeting would be necessary in December so that the Committee could consider the draft and put any recommendations forward. Assurance was given by officers that there would be adequate time for scrutiny.

19. Housing Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan Progress Report

Members were concerned that there was not enough detail regarding delivery to be able to properly scrutinise the progress. Members believed that the report should be transparent and that any sale of brownfield land should state the amount for which it was sold, the purchaser and their intended use for the site. The director explained that the report was the annual update on the original strategy and was only an overview, but that scrutiny could take place at the time of disposal. Members however requested more information and the Cabinet Member would discuss what was required.

Members were informed that the presentations recently given by the Director of Finance and the Housing Manager were both available online to members who had not been able to attend.

A number of questions were raised on some of the detail in the report relating to housing affordability numbers, the current position on homelessness and housing need, and the warm-up wight scheme. Further details would be provided, including the number of dwellings which had been insulated.

20. Isle of Wight Skills Plan

The four-year plan was ongoing and it was agreed that direction of travel was good. The council had been working with other authorities, partners and the IW College to match the skills required over the coming years with training being provided, now and in future years.

GKN had recently held an apprenticeship day with 24 apprenticeships on offer, specifically targeted at areas of skills gaps.

Members requested that more detail be provided on the substance of the plan itself next time the plan was discussed.

Funding was available through the SLEP for skills bootcamps and for re-training and re-skilling. Further details were awaited on when and where these bootcamps would be held.

Members believed that young people should be inspired to stay on the island or return after university. The Cabinet Member would endeavour to find the methodology used to identify skills shortages and gather data on young people leaving the island.

It was confirmed that careers opportunities were communicated via a variety of means including adult learning provision, careers fairs, employers' visits to schools and the business centre at IW College.

21. **Committee's Work Plan**

The current workplan was noted. The Chairman requested that an additional meeting be set up to discuss the Draft Island Planning Strategy.

A request was made to include looking at neighbourhood plans.

For the meeting on 4 January 2024 an item would be added to look at visitor numbers from the ferry companies and any trends and other relevant data. A scoping document would be prepared for 4 January meeting.

21a **Beach Management Framework 2021-2026**

Cllr Quirk declared an interest in this item with reference to steps and paths in Shanklin as he was a local member for Shanklin. Due to two sets of steps being closed off, the coastal path was proposed to be brought inland and there was concern that it would go across private land.

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed to the scoping document for this item for 4 January.

22. **Members' Question Time**

Cllr Stuart asked whether he could have an update in writing regarding the current position relating to Kingston Marine Park. He was informed that since November 2022 when the decision was made to sell the site, work had been underway in preparation for planning permission. The project was still on track though it had taken longer than expected. A further update would be provided when more detail was available.

Cllr Stuart asked a question that had arisen from the Audit Committee regarding the meaning of the phrase "reinterpretation of the highways contract". The Cabinet Member was not able to clarify its meaning without knowing the wider context but could be a reference to contractual clauses.

An item was requested for the workplan regarding the Highways PFI contract.

Cllr Jones Evans referred to a paper which had been produced in 2021 regarding 20mph speed limits and asked whether the Committee would look at the matter once again, and was informed that it would be looked at again in the future.

The Chairman suggested that as a result of the recent organisational review the name of the Committee be changed to 'Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Communities' or suitable alternative to align with the new Directorates. The Committee were asked to give this further consideration.

CHAIRMAN