



Minutes

Name of meeting	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and Time	TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs J Robertson (Chairman), P Spink (Vice-Chairman), R Downer, W Drew, J Lever, C Quirk and Redrup
Co-opted	Simon Cooke (IWALC)
Also Present	Cllrs P Jordan, P Fuller, J Jones-Evans and K Lucioni, M Lilley, C Jarman and C Mosdell Sharon Betts, Roger Brown, Laura Gaudion, Kerry Hubbleday, Wendy Perera, Christopher Potter, Megan Tuckwell, Chris Ward and Melanie White
Also Present (Virtual)	Cllr C Critchison Simon Bryant, Natasha Dix, Colin Rowland and Claire Shand
Apologies	Cllr K Love

44 Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)

Apologies had been received from Cllr Karl Love.

45 Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

46 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received at this stage.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that a general dispensation was applied enabling councillors to discuss matters of the budget.

47 Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

No public questions were received.

48 Progress Update

The chairman presented the report which provided an overview of the progress against actions and outcomes from previous meetings. It was confirmed that the formal request made by members of the committee in March 2023 to view the confidential Floating Bridge settlement had been refused.

RESOLVED:

THAT the progress report be noted.

49 Committee's Workplan:

49a Forward Plan

49b Committee's Work Programme 2022-25

Consideration was given to the committee's work programme and the committee were invited to identify any item contained within the published forward plan that would benefit from early consideration within the committee's own workplan or that of one of the policy and scrutiny committees.

It was agreed that the Future Governance Report (due for consideration by the Full Council in January 2024) would be added to the committee's workplan for its meeting on 9 January 2024.

The chairman advised that it had been agreed with the chairmen of the Policy and Scrutiny Committees that the scrutinisation of flooding matters would be led by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. It was advised that an informal briefing was being sought for December 2023, and an agenda item would be added to the committee's workplan for its meeting on 9 January 2024, to which external partners would be invited to attend both meetings.

RESOLVED:

THAT the committee's work programme, and the forward plan, be noted.

50 Budget Assumptions

The Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer was in attendance to present the progress against the key budget assumptions which had been predicted as part of the 2023-24 budget setting process. The committee received the forecast for the 2024-25 budget, based on the key assumptions for both costs and funding. Questions were raised in relation to the fair funding review (and potential additional funding as part of the 'Island Deal'), the Autumn statement, social care funding, interest rate variables, treasury management and cash flow, the use of contingency reserves, in-year financial mitigation measures, and the grant funding arrangements for refugee housing.

RESOLVED:

THAT the presentation on budget assumptions be considered and noted.

51 Cyber Strategy 2023-2030

Consideration was given to the draft Cyber Strategy 2023-2030, prior to its consideration and adoption by the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, Community Protection, and ICT, on 19 December 2023. The strategy was endorsed, and it was suggested that it be reviewed by the committee again in two years.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Cyber Strategy 2023-2030 be endorsed.

52 Isle of Wight Community Safety Partnership Update

The committee received a verbal update from the Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, Community Protection, and ICT, on the progress with the Isle of Wight Community Safety Partnership's annual report for 2022-23. It was confirmed that the report would be available to be presented to the committee at its meeting in February 2024.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be noted.

53 Perpetrator Programme

The Director of Public Health presented an update on the recently recommissioned domestic abuse service for people using abusive behaviours, which included an overview of what was offered by the service and what outcomes it was aiming to achieve. Questions were raised in relation to the demographic statistics for perpetrators, the correlation with drug and alcohol misuse, and the preventative activities and initiatives underway. Questions were raised in relation to the methods of evaluating the effectiveness of the programme, and how outcomes would be demonstrated. Discussion took place regarding under-reporting, and the committee sought additional information with regards to the what the police service were doing internally to train officers responding to instances of domestic abuse. It was advised that this would be reviewed again by the committee at its meeting in March 2024, including a copy of initial needs assessment in order for the committee to assess whether the programme was meeting the needs of the population.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be noted.

54 Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report Q2 - 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report which provided a summary of progress against Corporate Plan activities for Quarter 2 of 2023-24 and detailed any issues which required attention (and the remedial action in place to deal with these). Comments were made regarding the Disabled Facilities Grant, and the data which indicated that the current demand was expected to exceed the current budget of £1.8million to £4million. The Director of Adult Social Care outlined the allocation of the funding and confirmed that the demand shown was reflective of multiple financial years. It was agreed that future reporting should clarify this matter.

Discussion took place regarding the data which showed an increase in the number of fly-tipping incidents and a decrease in the number of actions taken over a three-year period. It was agreed that written response would be provided. Clarity was given around the definition of fly-tipping and the increased use of the Fix My Street app (which categorised uncollected waste as fly-tipping). It was recommended that future reporting should include additional narrative and clean data.

Questions were raised regarding the rise in the proportion of young people recorded as not in employment, education, or training, and what was being done to address this. It was agreed that written response would be provided. Questions were raised regarding the additional CCTV network coverage in place over the summer period, and whether there had been any evidence of successful outcomes from this. It was agreed that written response would be provided.

The committee sought an update on the development of the Parking Strategy and the Leader confirmed that this was scheduled to take place in 2024.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

55 Members' Question Time

Cllr Michael Lilley submitted written questions in relation to flooding (MQ 10-23). The Leader provided a verbal response and confirmed that a full written response would be provided.

Cllr Clare Mosdell asked an oral question regarding the announcement of additional government funding for the two council-owned swimming pools and sought clarity around why community pools had not been included. The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure, confirmed that bids were made for all Island pools however only Medina Leisure Centre and The Heights were eligible at this time due to energy costs. Cllr Clare Mosdell asked a supplementary question regarding the energy suppliers for West Wight Sports and Community Centre.

Cllr Joe Lever asked an oral question in relation the Flood Recovery Grant. The Chief Executive provided assurance that work was ongoing to secure the funding, however the eligibility criteria had not yet been confirmed.

Cllr Clare Mosdell asked an oral question in relation to the workplan. The chairman outlined the process for work-planning and the identification of future agenda items by members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Clare Mosdell asked an oral question in relation to the recording of councillors' oral questions in the minutes. The Monitoring Officer confirmed the position as per the council's constitution.

CHAIRMAN

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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Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Tuesday, 7 November 2023**Written question from Cllr Michael Lilley to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee:**

In light of the recent flooding in Ryde and across the Island, there appears to be evidence of poor communication between the agencies particularly Environment Agency, Southern Water, Island Roads, IW Council, Parish and Town Councils, Emergency Services, and other stakeholders. This has left residents, families, businesses, and other organisations who have been directly flooded feeling not listened too, abandoned, angry, and in their eyes, unsupported.

1. Who is responsible overall for such a crisis on the Isle of Wight and what is the Council doing about improving communication, particular in the short-term and how are they communicating to the public, especially those who do not have benefit of internet? (note most flooded households lost their internet). Not a huge amount of internet/online information was sent out, often after the event. If you didn't pick it on-line, you would not have known.
2. What is the current emergency plan agencies were following, and can this plan be made available? Was it followed?
3. Post-Covid-19 all Parish and Town Council alongside IW Council had Resilience and Crisis/Emergency Plans in place. There is one in Ryde Town Council. Why hasn't IW Council fully recognised these plans alongside their emergency plans and why was there an observed lack of a lead coordinating body bringing all the agencies together in a joined up and coordinated way?
4. What is IW Council doing to get help out to people in need of support due to the flooding now, when it matters?

Response

I appreciate that everyone affected in the homes and businesses will have questions and their communities will want to tell their stories. However, the council will need to investigate, gather evidence, and prepare a full honest and open report which I will commit to bring to scrutiny at the earliest opportunity. The council as the local Flood Risk Authority will be preparing an investigation and flood report regarding all communities impacted and will be engaging with all affected residents and key stakeholders.

1. The Isle of Wight Council Response

The Isle of Wight Council led the response on the Island.

During the response Information Hubs were stood up in the most affected areas to provide direct communication and in-person support to affected residents, including:

- Ryde (25 and 26 October with housing team support)
- Newport,
- East Cowes,
- Sandown,

- *Yarmouth and*
- *Brading*

Printed information and guidance was made available in the hubs and well as staff to talk to.

On the 25 October and subsequent days, councillors were working in their communities, engaging with residents and passing on information issued by the council to the community.

The council also set up a dedicated Floodline help and guidance number for residents affected by flooding - this was available overnight at the height of the worst weather.

Warnings and alerts issued by The Met Office and Environment Agency were shared regularly across the council's social media platforms. Between 24 October and 2 November, the council issued some 50 Facebook posts. This includes where we have shared our posts into community groups. The reach for these posts was more than 345,000 Facebook accounts.

The council's website was kept up to date with the latest information, including important safety advice and guidance on what to do before, during and after extreme weather. Pages were updated when information changed, sometimes two or three times per day.

As well as our pre-prepared pages about Flooding and Storms and Gales, we created extra pages on School closures and service updates, What to do if you flood water contains sewage, Storm damaged tree information, Updates on what to do with waste and recycling and Rights of Way closures.

The communications through the website were timely and made an impact, with a full homepage takeover. Any queries or requests for help from internal services or through the command structure were acted on quickly and content produced in support. In comparison to other councils, the council's website was very comprehensive and made it easy for residents to find information they needed.

An initial look at the statistics shows the authority had a 21.52 per cent uplift in page views over the past week. Communications with the websites team, communications team and other services were prompt, efficient and co-ordinated. Much of the council's comms focussed on sign-posting residents to trusted sources of information.

These links were also shared with councillors (IWC and town and parish councils) as well as local media for onward circulation and we are thankful for all their support. Further communications were issued via the council's residents' newsletter (more than 4,800 residents), a media briefing was organised for local press and daily councillor briefings were established ahead of Storm Ciaran.

In total, the council issued seven press releases and responded to numerous local, regional and national media enquiries and interview requests. The whole team worked all the hours that were needed to ensure proactive and reactive work was completed to the highest standard.

2. Emergency Management Arrangements

The Council's Emergency Management Team maintains plans for a variety of emergencies, one of those being the Council's Emergency Response and Recovery Plan (ERRP). Elements of this plan were used in the response to the adverse weather to establish flexible and scalable response structures based on information available at the time.

Protectively marked as OFFICIAL SENSITIVE, a redacted public facing version of the plan can be found on the Council's website, here – <https://www.iow.gov.uk/keep-the-island-safe/emergency-management/the-emergency-management-team/>. Complimenting the Council's ERRP, the relevant sections of the Council's Severe Weather Arrangements Document were used, this plan is protectively marked as OFFICIAL SENSITIVE.

From a multi-agency perspective:

The tactical and strategic aspect of the response was co-ordinated through the Hampshire & Isle Wight Local Resilience Forum's Emergency Response Arrangements. The relevant sections of the Hampshire & Isle Wight Local Resilience Forum's Multi-Agency Flood Plan and the Island's Multi-Agency Evacuation and Shelter Arrangements were used.

These plans are protectively marked as OFFICIAL SENSITIVE. Plans are protectively marked as OFFICIAL SENSITIVE, as they contain data or information which, if released to the public in general could:

- Impede the effectiveness and ability of the Council to respond in an emergency.*
- Undermine the proper management of the public sector and its operations during such emergencies.*

The Council's Emergency Management Team can provide a more detailed briefing on the content of those plans if required.

3. Town and Parish Emergency Plans

Not all Town and Parish Councils have Crisis/Emergency Plans, and we are aware that a plan exists for Ryde and Binstead. On the morning of 25 October, knowing that Ryde Town Council did have a plan, conversation to place between the Emergency Management Team and Ryde Town Council staff, to identify potential locations for the establishment of a site close to the affected area that could be used to provide immediate respite for residents and operate as an "information hub", staffed by Council Officers.

Although some sites identified in the Plan were discussed at this time, the Council's Resilience Manager determined that the option of using Ryde Castle provided an immediately available site, close to the incident.

As the day unfolded the "hub" relocated to Aspire (a location identified in the Ryde Town Council Plan), to provide more space and an area within which more sensitive discussions could be undertaken. This move also enabled closer working between the deployed Council Officers and the staff in Aspire.

The co-ordination of the multi-agency response at the tactical and strategic level was undertaken through the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum's Emergency Response Arrangements (see the answer to question 2).

On the Island, regular co-ordination meetings were undertaken between the Council, Island Roads, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary, the Maritime & Coastguard Agency and the Isle of Wight Ambulance Service.

These meetings provided the link into operational engagement undertaken by the Council with the Environment Agency, Southern Water and SSEN, Town and Parish Councils and enabled direct engagement with Councillors when required.

4. Flood Recovery

In line with the Council's ERRP, whilst the Council was still responding to the emergency a Recovery Lead was identified (Colin Rowland, Strategic Director, Community Services). A Recovery Team has been established and is implementing a recovery strategy.

Specifically in Ryde, the council has worked with ward members and the Town Council to:

- *Expedite skip licencing for the affected area to less than 48 hours*
- *Enable multiple tip trips per day for residents clearing their homes and volunteers clearing neighbouring family and friends' waste.*
- *Temporarily rehoused those most in need.*
- *Provided additional support to older and other vulnerable residents.*
- *Communicated to residents affected the availability of discretionary hardship payments and council tax relief.*
- *Provided information and advice through the Town Council and local councillors working with the community.*
- *Provided thousands of additional sandbags and replenished stocks when requested.*
- *Information and advice to affected businesses.*

We will continue to provide support and advice to those affected as we recognise that it will take some time for those affected to fully recover from the recent flood events and ensure that:

- *Affected residents are enabled to return home or have plans with insurance companies to return to their homes. Support is provided for those people that are identified as living in uninsured properties.*
- *Businesses & charities are operating as business as usual and fully functioning.*
- *Public Infrastructure is fully recovered.*
- *Residents are well informed and empowered to move on.*
- *A flood report is produced which identifies costs and benefits of actions taken and recommendations for other actions that support more resilient communities.*