



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION
Date and Time	THURSDAY 4 JANUARY 2024 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs N Stuart (Chairman), K Love, C Quirk, I Ward, P Fuller and P Jordan
Also Present (Non voting)	Cllrs P Fuller, J Jones-Evans and P Jordan
Officers Present	Alex Minns, Colin Rowland and Melanie White
Apologies	Cllrs J Lever and M Beston

31. Apologies and Changes in Membership (if any)

Apologies were received from Councillors M Beston and J Lever.

32. Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 be approved subject to the following:

Councillor K Love be noted as sending apologies.

33. Declarations of Interest

Councillor K Love declared an interest in the Visitor Economy item as he was a B&B owner.

34. Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

There were no public questions received.

35. Progress on outcomes and recommendations from previous meetings

A visit to the waste education centre was still to be arranged, the Director for Communities advised that he would chase this up.

The Chairman advised that the Draft Island Planning Strategy (DIPs) decision had been moved from January due to a change in legislation. The Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal Protection and Flooding advised that due to the release of a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), where it made reference to islands with no land bridge that have a significant proportion of elderly residents that may be able to apply for exceptional circumstances, the decision was taken to delay the decision on the DIPs.

The Committee asked for a timeline to expect the DIPs to be considered by Full Council, the Cabinet Member advised that consultation with planning consultants had started and once the advice was received a decision would be made regarding the route and timelines. The Leader advised that if the authority decided to adopt the exceptional circumstances route the existing plan could not run, this could mean the plan was required to start from scratch. It was advised that the earliest the DIPs could be considered was March 2024.

36. Visitor Economy

The Managing Director from Visit Isle of Wight provided the Committee with a verbal presentation highlighting the statistics recorded for the 2023 tourist season, this included tourist numbers, spend and marketing figures.

The Island achieved a Local Visitor Economy Partnership, the Island is now one of 26 partnerships, which enables the Isle of Wight to assist and shape national policy.

Visitor numbers continued to rise, however they were not at pre covid figures, 1,961,348 visitors were recorded for 2023, with £279.6 million spent. Work to increase visitor numbers was on going with the vision of getting back to 2019 figures and increasing visitor numbers.

The Committee noted that hotels on the Island were set up for different markets, such as family holiday's, cycling breaks and the walking festivals. A branding project was discussed regarding targeting a tourism crossover of going for a walk in the morning and visiting the beach in the afternoon. Comments were made on how to extend the tourist season as attracting visitors outside of the peak season was difficult walking festivals were held outside of peak times to encourage visitors to extend the season.

Questions were raised regarding the ferry fares for visitors coming to the Island, it was explained that the data provided did not include ferry travel, plus some hotels provide discounts to visitors if they book their ferry through them.

The Director of Communities advised that the Authority was actively in conversations with ferry companies but that change needed to come from Government and that it wasn't just tourism that was affected.

The Cabinet member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure thanked visit IW for the presentation and outlined a funded project for an ambassador scheme where free training was provided to people that meet with visitors.

Due to the number of apologies received at this stage, the meeting was no longer quorate, therefore the remaining formal business did not proceed.

CHAIRMAN