



# Minutes

Name of meeting	<b>FULL COUNCIL</b>
Date and Time	<b>WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2024 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM</b>
Venue	<b>COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Present	Cllrs C Critchison (Chairman), K Love (Vice-Chairman), D Adams, D Andre, J Bacon, M Beston, E Blake, P Brading, G Brodie, V Churchman, I Dore, R Downer, W Drew, S Ellis, P Fuller, A Garratt, S Hendry, C Jarman, J Jones-Evans, P Jordan, J Lever, M Lilley, K Lucioni, J Medland, C Mosdell, J Nicholson, M Oliver, T Outlaw, L Peacey-Wilcox, M Price, R Quigley, C Quirk, R Redrup, Redrup, J Robertson, P Spink, I Stephens, N Stuart and I Ward

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64. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 be approved.

65. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were received at this stage.

66. **Public Question Time**

Written public questions were submitted by Mr Giddings (PQ-02-24) and Mr Hardy on behalf of the Youth Council (PQ-03-24).

R Blachford asked a question relating to funding provided to schools for children with Special Educational Need (SEN), The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions advised that he would be happy to meet and discuss the issues, a written response to the question would be provided.

Cllr Parkes asked a question in relation to Transport and travel access to and from the Island, he asked what the Council was doing about this as a matter of urgency. The Leader (with responsibility for Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships) advised that the Council did not have control of the ferry companies, he was aware of a letter sent to ministers by Cllr K Love requesting regulation.

Cllr Parkes asked a supplementary question stating the ferry companies were no longer fit for purpose. The Leader advised that regular meetings with ferry companies were scheduled each month where concerns were raised by the Council.

**67. Chairman's Official Announcements**

The Chairman advised that she would provide an update next month, however she advised that the Mermaid Atlantic team had been invited to a presentation and details would be provided once they had been confirmed.

The Chairman proposed a motion to change the order of business to take the motion on notice to rescind part of the decision made at the last meeting prior to the budget item, the proposal was duly seconded.

A vote was taken and the result was as follows:

RESOLVED:

THAT the motion on notice to rescind part of the decision made at the January 2024 Full Council meeting be moved on the agenda.

**68. Leaders Update Report**

The Leader introduced his report and advised that he had nothing further to add.

A question regarding an update on the Kingston development was requested, the Leader advised that discussions had continued with a target of early April for a firm proposal of the site. The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure advised that a written response would be provided.

**69. Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance**

**69a Council Tax Premiums on Second Homes and Empty Properties**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance introduced the report and advised that the report had been discussed at both Corporate Scrutiny and Cabinet and received full backing.

A question was asked to clarify when the charges would apply, the Section 151 Officer confirmed the dates were correct as contained in the recommendations in the report.

The recommendation was duly seconded and a vote was taken, the result of which was:

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT Full Council adopt, commencing the billing period starting 1 April 2024, a council tax premium of 100 per cent for all long-term empty properties as

defined by amendments to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 in force on that date:

- (ii) Adopt, commencing the billing period starting 1 April 2025, a council tax premium of 100 per cent for all dwellings occupied periodically as defined by amendments to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 in force on that date (second homes); and
- (iii) That the Draft Council Tax Policy for Second Homes, Long Term Empty Properties and determining discounts for certain dwellings be adopted and that the council's Section 151 Officer delegated authority to amend the council's policy of premiums in line with secondary legislation and/or statutory guidance, as and when published in conjunction with the Revenues and Benefits Managers.

## 70. **Motions Submitted under Part 4A, Procedure Rule 9 of the Council's Constitution**

### 70a **By Councillor J Lever**

Councillor J Lever moved the following motion which was duly seconded:

Under Part 4B(8) – Notice to rescind decision

That the decision made by Full Council on 17 January 2024 to discontinue the current exceptional hardship policy be rescinded.

The Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF) is an integral part of the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme that provides additional financial relief for LCTS claimants facing 'exceptional hardship'. A decision which included discontinuing this aspect of the Local Council Tax Support scheme was made by full council on 17th January 2024.

This council notes that:

- The cost of living crisis has had a devastating impact on individuals and households, many of which are facing unprecedented financial pressures.
- From April 2023 and as of December 2023, 150 Islanders were successful in their application for the EHF.
- This equates to £44,292 of a total £50,000 fund; the Council is expected to exceed that fund total by the end of this financial year, as it did the last financial year.
- The number of successful EHF applicants and total EHF funds paid out have been increasing every year since the fund started in the 2016/17 financial year, clearly demonstrating there is a growing need for this fund.
- Discontinuing the EHF without a direct and suitable alternative would likely have adverse financial impacts on a growing number of Islanders that would have otherwise needed it. As a result the potential increases for negative health consequences for individuals and thus – unnecessarily – having wider reaching impacts on services, like our NHS.

- The decision to discontinue the EHF will result in an increased financial burden to the Isle of Wight Council should the Council use a suggestable alternative to the EHF, such as the Council Tax Discretionary Reductions (CDTR) scheme, as the costs of alternate schemes are not spread across preceptors but wholly that of the Isle of Wight Council.
- This motion does not seek to rescind the part of the previously made decision by full council that would see an uplift in the LCTS from 70% to 75%.

Council therefore resolves:

That the decision made by Full Council on 17 January 2024 to discontinue the current exceptional hardship policy be rescinded.

Following debate a vote was taken the results were as follows:

RESOLVED;

THAT the decision made by Full Council on 17 January 2024 to discontinue the current exceptional hardship policy be rescinded.

#### 71. **Budget and Council Tax Setting 2024-2025 and Future Years' Forecasts**

A 2024/25 Budget and Council Tax setting report had been received from the Leader (with responsibility for Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships). Budget amendments had been submitted from Cllrs Quigley and Brodie, the Liberal Democrat Group and jointly from the Conservative group and Empowering Islanders group. These had been accepted by the Section 151 Officer as being legal and presented a balanced budget.

The Leader moved all budget proposals which was duly seconded.

The Leader was invited to speak regarding the Cabinet budget proposals and the submitted budget amendment proposals.

An amendment to the proposal attached as Appendix 1 (and forming part of these minutes) was moved by Cllr R Quigley and Cllr G Brodie.

An amendment to the proposal attached as Appendix 2 (and forming part of these minutes) was moved by Cllr A Garratt.

An amendment to the proposal attached as Appendix 3 (and forming part of these minutes) was moved by Cllr C Mosdell and Cllr C Jarman.

Other Councillors of the Council also made comment on all the budget proposals.

The Leader (with responsibility for Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships), and the proposers of the amendments then summed up.

A named vote was taken on Cllr R Quigley and Cllr G Brodie's budget amendment, the results were as follows:

For (19)

Cllrs D Andre, J Bacon, C Critchison, G Brodie, I Dore, R Downer, P Fuller, A Garratt, J Jones-Evans, P Jordan, J Lever, M Lilley, K Love, K Lucioni, L Peacey Wilcox, R Quigley, S Redrup, I Stephens, N Stuart,

Against (20)

Cllrs D Adams, M Beston, E Blake, P Brading, V Churchman, W Drew, S Ellis, S Hendry, C Jarman, J Medland, C Mosdell, J Nicholson, M Oliver, T Outlaw, M Price, C Quirk, R Redrup, J Robertson, P Spink, I Ward

The amendment fell.

A named vote was taken on the Liberal Democrat's budget amendment, the results were as follows:

For (17)

Cllrs D Andre, J Bacon, C Critchison, I Dore, R Downer, P Fuller, A Garratt, J Jones-Evans, P Jordan, J Lever, M Lilley, K Love, K Lucioni, L Peacey Wilcox, S Redrup, I Stephens, N Stuart

Against (22)

Cllrs D Adams, M Beston, E Blake, P Brading, G Brodie, V Churchman, W Drew, S Ellis, S Hendry, C Jarman, J Medland, C Mosdell, J Nicholson, M Oliver, T Outlaw, M Price, R Quigley, C Quirk, R Redrup, J Robertson, P Spink, I Ward

The amendment fell.

A named vote was taken on the Conservative and Empowering Islanders budget amendment, the results were as follows:

For (20)

Cllrs D Adams, M Beston, E Blake, P Brading, V Churchman, W Drew, S Ellis, S Hendry, C Jarman, J Medland, C Mosdell, J Nicholson, M Oliver, T Outlaw, M Price, C Quirk, R Redrup, J Robertson, P Spink, I Ward

Against (19)

Cllrs D Andre, J Bacon, C Critchison, G Brodie, I Dore, R Downer, P Fuller, A Garratt, J Jones-Evans, P Jordan, J Lever, M Lilley, K Love, K Lucioni, L Peacey Wilcox, R Quigley, S Redrup, I Stephens, N Stuart

The amendment was carried

A named vote was taken on the substantive budget incorporating the amendment, the results were as follows:

For (30)

Cllrs D Adams, D Andre, J Bacon, M Beston, E Blake, P Brading, V Churchman, I Dore, R Downer, W Drew, S Ellis, P Fuller, S Hendry, C Jarman, J Jones-Evans, P Jordan, J Lever, K Lucioni, J Medland, C Mosdell, J Nicholson, M Oliver, T Outlaw, L Peacey Wilcox, C Quirk, R Redrup, J Robertson, P Spink, I Stephens, I Ward

Against (8)

Cllrs G Brodie, A Garratt, M Lilley, K Love, M Price, S Redrup, N Stuart, R Quigley

Abstain (1)

Cllr C Critchison

RESOLVED:

THAT Council approved the following:

- a) (amended recommendation) The revised Revenue Budget for the financial year 2023/24 and the Revenue Budget for the financial year 2024/25 as set out in the General Fund Summary (attached as Appendix 1 amended) which includes:
- (i) Additional spending in Adult Social Care of £6.3m and Children's Services of £5.0m
  - (ii) A Covid Contingency of £5m
  - (iii) No Revenue Contribution to Capital in 2023/24 or 2024/25

Appendix 1 (Amended) includes the following changes listed in the tables below:

**i) Additional Savings - Reductions to Budget Estimates**

<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Impact on Level of Service &amp; Service Outcomes</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26 &amp; Future Years</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Children's Services &amp; Corporate Functions</b>			
New	Contact Centre - Reduction of 4 hours per week from Monday - Friday opening times of 9am - 5pm determined by time of least demand	(8,400)	(8,400)
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>(8,400)</b>	<b>(8,400)</b>
<b>Deputy Leader, Housing &amp; Finance</b>			
New	Withdrawal from Transformation Reserve	(630,000)	0
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>(630,000)</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>(638,400)</b>	<b>(8,400)</b>

**Additional Costs - Additions to Budget Estimates**

<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Increases to Portfolio Budgets</b>	<b>2024/25 £</b>	<b>2025/26 &amp; Future Years</b>
		<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Children's Services &amp; Corporate Functions</b>			
12	Re-instate Contact Centre Saturday Service 9am -1 pm	8,400	8,400
New	Feasibility Study for an On-Island residential facility for Children & Young people	30,000	
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>38,400</b>	<b>8,400</b>
<b>Adult Social Care &amp; Public Health</b>			
New	Feasibility Study for Digital Technological Aids for Adult Social Care	30,000	
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Deputy Leader, Housing &amp; Finance</b>			
New	Feasibility Study for Prefabricated Relocatable Homes	50,000	
New	Feasibility Study for installation of Solar Panels over major car parks and IW Council buildings	20,000	
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>138,400</b>	<b>8,400</b>

- (a) Any variation arising from the Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 or any further savings made in 2023/24 arising at the year-end (after allowing for specific carry forward requests) be transferred to the Revenue Reserve for Capital, Transformation Reserve, and General Reserves with the level of each transfer to be determined by the S.151 Officer.
- (b) That the level of Council Tax be increased by 2.99% for general purposes in accordance with the referendum threshold<sup>[1]</sup> for 2024/25 announced by Government (as calculated in Appendix 2)
- (c) That the level of Council Tax be increased by a further 2.0% beyond the referendum threshold (as calculated in Appendix 2) to take advantage of the flexibility offered by Government to implement a "Social Care Precept"; and that in accordance with the conditions of that flexibility, the full amount of the associated sum generated of £1,977,705 is passported direct to Adult Social Care
- (d) That the amounts set out in Appendix 2 be now calculated by the Council for the financial year 2024/25 in accordance with Section 31 and Sections 34 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992
- (e) The S.151 Officer be given delegated authority to implement any variation to the overall level of Council Tax arising from the final notification of the Hampshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire

& Rescue Authority and Parish and Town Council precepts, and amend the calculations set out in Appendix 2 accordingly

- (f) The savings proposals for each Portfolio amounting, in total, to £2.75m for 2024/25 and continuing into future years as set out on the next page:

Portfolio	Controllable Budget	Savings Proposal	
	£	£	%
Adult Social Care & Public Health*	57,782,000	919,900	1.6%
Children's Services, Education & Corporate Functions*	41,238,000	207,000	0.5%
Climate Change, Biosphere & Waste	6,777,000	68,000	1.0%
Deputy Leader - Housing & Finance	8,292,000	107,100	1.3%
Economy, Regeneration, Culture & Leisure	3,052,000	24,000	0.8%
Leader - Transport Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships**	13,658,000	1,167,000	8.5%
Planning, Coastal Protection & Flooding	2,361,000	0	0.0%
Regulatory Services, Community Protection & ICT	11,340,000	257,000	2.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>144,500,000</b>	<b>2,750,000</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

\* Excludes the additional funding passported through to Adult Social Care of £6.3m (which if included would result in an overall increase of 9.4%) and the additional funding for Children's Services, Education & Lifelong Skills of £5.0m (which if included would result in an overall increase of 15.3%)

\*\* Excludes £19.4m of PFI grant funding, on a gross expenditure basis the saving amounts to 3.5%

- (g) (amended recommendation) Directors be instructed to start planning how the Council will achieve the savings requirements of £9m for the 3 year period 2025/26 to 2027/28 and that this be incorporated into Service Business Plans
- (h) The minimum level of Revenue Balances as at 31 March 2025, predicated on the approval of £2.75m savings in 2024/25 be set at £8.0m to reflect the known and expected budget and financial risks to the Council
- (i) Members have regard for the "Statement of the Section 151 Officer in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003"



- (j) (amended recommendation) The Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2028/29 set out in Appendix 5 (amended) which includes all additions, deletions and amendments for slippage and re-phasing
- (k) (amended recommendation) The new Capital Investment Proposals ("New Starts") - 2024/25 set out in Appendix 4 be reflected within the recommended Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2028/29 and be funded from the available Capital Resources, be mended to reflect the following changes:

Scheme Description - Additions & Reductions		Increase / (Decrease) in Corporate Resources	Total Corporate Resources Allocated
		£	£
<b>Additional Capital Scheme Proposals (New):</b>			
<b>Economy, Regeneration, Culture &amp; Leisure</b>			
New	Supporting Tourism Infrastructure Fund	200,000	200,000
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>
<b>Children's Services, Education &amp; Corporate Functions</b>			
New	On-Island Residential facility for Children & Young people -subject to financial viability being established and agreed by S151 Officer	5,000,000	5,000,000
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>
<b>Deputy Leader, Housing &amp; Finance</b>			
New	Installation of Solar Panels over major carparks and IW Councilbuildings - subject to financial viability being established and agreed by S151 Officer	3,000,000	3,000,000
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>
<b>Leader, Transport &amp; Infrastructure, Highways PFI &amp; Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight &amp; External Partnerships</b>			
New	Options appraisal for maintaining the A3055 as a viable route for the whole length between Luccombe and Freshwater	250,000	250,000
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>250,000</b>	<b>250,000</b>
<b>Adult Social Care &amp; Public Health</b>			
New	Digital Technological Aids for Adult Social Care - subject to business case and financial viability being established and agreed by S151 Officer	500,000	500,000
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>
	<b>Total Additions</b>	<b>8,950,000</b>	<b>8,950,000</b>
<b>Reductions / Deletions to Proposed Capital Schemes:</b>			
<b>Leader, Transport &amp; Infrastructure, Highways PFI &amp; Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight &amp; External Partnerships</b>			
21	Re-allocate funding from DfT Local Transport Capital Funding	(250,000)	720,000

	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>(250,000)</b>	<b>720,000</b>
<b>Economy, Regeneration, Culture &amp; Leisure</b>			
124	Re-allocate funding from Place/Towns Initiative Fund	(200,000)	0
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>(200,000)</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total Reductions/Deletions</b>	<b>(450,000)</b>	<b>720,000</b>
	<b>Total Overall Change</b>	<b>8,500,000</b>	

- (l) The allocation of Disabled Facilities Grants be made to the Better Care Fund, and reflected within the recommended Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2028/29
- (m) The S.151 Officer be given delegated authority to determine how each source of finance is used to fund the overall Capital Programme and to alter the overall mix of financing, as necessary, to maximise the flexibility of capital resources used and minimise the ongoing costs of borrowing to the Council
- (n) That the S.151 Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council be given delegated authority to release capital resources held back for any contingent items that might arise, and for any match funding requirements that may be required of the Council in order to secure additional external capital funding (e.g. bids for funding from Government or any other external source).
- (o) The Capital Strategy 2024/25, including the Minimum Revenue Position Statement contained therein (Appendix 6)
- (p) The Investment Strategy (Non-Treasury Investments) 2024/25 (Appendix 7)
- (q) (amended recommendation) That delegated authority be given to the S.151 Officer to make any necessary changes to either the Investment Strategy or the Capital Strategy in accordance with the proposed changes to the capital programme set out in this Amendment.
- (q) (additional recommendation) That Cabinet be requested to undertake a review into any contractually uncommitted Capital Schemes (excluding any schemes necessary for the delivery of statutory services) to assess their ongoing level of priority and value for money in the context of the need to make innovations in the delivery of statutory services and the chronic shortage of affordable housing; this to be scrutinised by the Policy and Scrutiny Committee (or any successor body)
- (r) (additional recommendation) That Cabinet are requested, with immediate effect, to ensure that when evaluating "Best Consideration" for disposals of IoW Council owned land, significant weight should be assigned to bids from organisations that can deliver affordable housing and from bids from

Town & Parish Councils for local infrastructure development; where alternative bids are preferred, full justification should be provided.

- (u) (additional recommendation) That Cabinet are requested to adopt a simplified and less onerous application process for access to the Local Council Tax Support - Exceptional Hardship Fund and that options on how this can be provisioned are brought forward.

1. It is recommended that the Council note the following in respect of the Council's Budget:

- (a) The Revenue Budget 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 1 has been prepared on the basis of a 4.99% increase in Council Tax, any reduction from the overall 4.99% Council Tax increase proposed will require additional savings of £988,900 for each 1% reduction in order for the Budget 2024/25 to be approved
- (b) The Revenue Forecasts for 2025/26 onwards as set out in the section entitled "Revenue Forecasts 2025/26 to 2027/28" and Appendix 1
- (c) The estimated Savings Requirement of £3.0m for the three year period 2025/26 to 2027/28, for financial and service planning purposes, be phased as follows:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>In Year Savings Requirement £m</b>	<b>Cumulative Saving £m</b>
2025/26	1.0	1.0
2026/27	1.0	2.0
2027/28	1.0	3.0

- (d) The Transformation Reserve held to fund the upfront costs associated with Spend to Save Schemes and Invest to Save Schemes holds a very modest uncommitted balance of £3.2m and will only be replenished from contributions from the Revenue Budget and an approval to the transfer of any further savings at year end
- (e) Should the Council elect to reduce the level of savings below £2.75m in 2024/25 (and £1.0m p.a. thereafter), the Council's financial risk will increase and therefore the minimum level of General Reserves held will also need to increase in order to maintain the Council's financial resilience
- (f) The Council Tax base for the financial year 2024/25 will be 54,407.3 [item T in the formula in Section 31 B(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")].
- (g) The Council Tax element of the Collection Fund for 2023/24 is estimated to be in surplus by £1,483,500 which is shared between the Isle of Wight

Council (85.3%) and the Police & Crime Commissioner (11.1%) and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority (3.6%)

- (h) The Business Rate element of the Collection Fund for 2023/24 is estimated to be in deficit by £3,354,365 of which is shared between the Isle of Wight Council (49%), the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Authority (1%) and the Government (50%)
- (i) The Retained Business Rate income<sup>[2]</sup> for 2024/25 based on the estimated Business Rate element of the Collection Fund deficit as at March 2024, the Non Domestic Rates poundage for 2024/25 and estimated rateable values for 2024/25 has been set at £43,763,020.

The Equality Impact Assessment (attached at Appendix 8)

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<sup>[1]</sup> Council Tax increases beyond the referendum threshold can only be implemented following a "Yes" vote in a local referendum.

<sup>[2]</sup> Includes Retained Business Rates of £17,546,907, "Top Up" of £12,834,713, S.31 Grants of £15,025,039 a Collection Fund deficit of £1,643,639

## 72. **Report of the Deputy Monitoring Officer**

### 72a **Appointment of Independent Remuneration Panel Member**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that a recruitment process had been undertaken to ensure the Independent Remuneration Panel was quorate.

The recommendation was proposed and duly seconded. The vote was taken, the result of which was:

RESOLVED:

THAT Dr Angela Wright be appointed to serve on the Independent Remuneration Panel for a term of three years.

## 73. **Appointment - Local Pension Board**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that there had been a vacancy on the Local Pension Board, Cllr P Fuller had been nominated and accepted, he had resigned from the Pension Fund Committee to allow him to accept the nomination.

RESOLVED:

THAT it is agreed that Cllr P Fuller is appointed to the Local Pension Board as the elected member appointee in the employer representative category.

**74. Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance**

**74a Discretionary Rate Relief Policy**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance advised that in line with changes made by the Non-Domestic Rating Act 2023 changes had been recommended. The changes included the effective start date of any relief and changes to notices and periods of notice to be given.

The recommendation was proposed and duly seconded and a vote was taken, the result of which was:

RESOLVED:

THAT Full Council adopts options 1 and 4 within the report, namely that:

THAT Backdating provisions which mirror the current legislative backdating rules are adopted within the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy. Awards will be considered from the date the application is received. In exceptional circumstances consideration may be given to awarding rate relief for a retrospective period where the ratepayer can demonstrate good cause for not submitting the application earlier, subject to the following constraints relating to discretionary awards:

- (i) If the application is received by 30 September, the award can only be backdated to 1 April of the current financial year.
- (ii) If the application is received after the 30 September, the award can only be backdated to 1 April of the current financial year.
- (iii) That relief can be amended or ceased by the Council at any such time (determined on a daily basis) as the Council considers that the ratepayer no longer meets the criteria for receiving the relief.

THAT any future changes required to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy are passed for delegated decision to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance and the s151 Officer, in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer, if appropriate.

**75. Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions**

**75a Pay Policy**

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions introduced the report and proposed the recommendation which was duly seconded.

Council questioned information contained within the report, the Cabinet Member advised that he would circulate the answers after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT Full Council approved the updated pay policy as drafted for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.
- (ii) THAT answers to questions raised would be circulated to all Councillors.

**76. Motions Submitted under Part 4, Procedure Rule 9 of the Council's Constitution**

**77. By Councillor M Lilley**

Cllr M Lilley sought councils consent to withdraw his motion. Council duly agreed to the request.

**78. Member Questions to the Leader and to any other Cabinet Member**

Cllr G Brodie submitted a written question, the Leader (with responsibility Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships) provided a written response. (MQ 10/24).

Cllr G Brodie asked a supplementary question. Why was the number five bus between East Cowes and Newport targeted, the Leader advised that the decision had been made in partnership with Southern Vectis.

Cllr R Quigley asked if the Leader would support him taking on the responsibility for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) as a community contact. The Leader believed it was a great idea and was happy for Cllr Quigley to move forward with this.

Cllr K Love asked if a letter could be written to the directors of Red Funnel regarding their staffing issues particularly given that the Islands economy depends on the service. The Leader agreed to send a letter to Red Funnel, he would share both the letter and response with all members.

Cllr J Nicholson asked a question regarding the continued overspend in the community care budget. He asked which budgets the money had come from to support and whether an impact assessment had been undertaken. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health advised that she would provide a written response.

Cllr C Jarman highlighted the responses to the public consultation on the budget and asked why results of the ~~budget consultation~~ had not been taken into account when proposing a council tax increase. Cllr I Stephens agreed.

Cllr P Brading asked what provision had been made medium term financial plan of evidence of debt that may fall to the Isle of Wight Council due to issues with school place planning. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions advised that planned periods of engagement were already scheduled with the public and stakeholders.

Cllr P Brading asked a supplementary concerning the potential debt if any schools went under with the Council being responsible for them and what provision has been made. The Cabinet Member advised that it was part of a wider range of considerations.

Cllr V Churchman asked a question regarding the IW Pension Fund and the staffing issues within the Pension team, she asked what was being done to replace the fund manager when the post became vacant, and enlarging the pension fund team to handle the situation. The Leader advised that a written reply would be provided and copied to all members.

Cllr M Price asked what provision was in place to deal with standing water on roads, the Leader (with responsibility Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships) advised that there were many factors that could cause standing water on roads, the authority was doing what they could, working with partner agencies and Island Roads.

Cllr E Blake asked what contingency was in place if Ventnor was completely shut off without access by emergency services, the Leader (with responsibility Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships) advised that Island Roads were responsible for the Islands road network.

Cllr E Blake asked a supplementary question stating the Whitwell road could be the only road into Ventnor, what is the contingency plan to get people into Ventnor, the Leader explained that there were current safety concerns on some of the roads into Ventnor, there were no plans to build new roads on the Island.

CHAIRMAN

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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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Full Council – 28 February 2024

**Written question from Councillor Geoff Brodie to Leader (with responsibility Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy, Strategic Oversight and External Partnerships)**

How do you justify the expenditure (by largely-ignored delegated decision) of Bus Service Improvement Funding of £300,000 over 2 years on increasing the regularity of an existing frequent bus service between Newport and East Cowes, when there are rural areas like Havenstreet that have no bus service at all. Particularly when the decision was based on describing the Newport-East Cowes route as 'rural'?

## ***Response***

It should be noted that the proposals set out for local use of the Department for Transport's Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus (BSIP+) funding, serve wider areas of the Island than just the service 5 between Newport and East Cowes. Specifically, these proposals include funding support for the local bus services 6 and 12, serving many rural communities within the south and west of the Island.

Though, the reason to focus most of the funding towards enhancing the service 5 between Newport and East Cowes, is that the proposal aligns with the main purpose of the funding. This is to primarily fund enhancements to local bus services where beyond the initial period there is a high likelihood that they will become commercially sustainable. From the information and advice provided by Southern Vectis, as our local commercial bus operator, this very much the case. It will boost public transport usage on one of the principal commuter and leisure corridors on the Island, which aligns with our corporate priorities.

Whilst it might seem that £300,000 is quite a substantial amount of funding for this specific enhancement, this does cover the costs for an additional vehicle and drivers being allocated, which are required for an extra journey per hour for the full two years.

We are just about to revise the local Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for the Island as a whole, including rural communities such as Havenstreet and what can be done to improve provision within these areas. Current consideration is being given towards 'Demand Responsive Transport' (DRT) similar to services that operated in past where residents would phone in advance to make a booking on a local community bus service, though of course this is subject to an operator coming forwards and relevant funding being available. Unfortunately, commercial operations through small communities, especially in rural locations which are not on commuter routes, do not perform particularly well without ongoing subsidy, which is why at this time it is not within scope at present given the level of funding that would be required to set up new services.

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