

Minutes

Name of meeting	CABINET
Date and Time	THURSDAY 14 MARCH 2024 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs P Jordan (Chairman), D Andre, J Bacon, P Fuller, J Jones-Evans, K Lucioni and I Stephens
Also Present	Sharon Betts, Simon Bryant and Ashley Whittaker
Also Present (Virtual)	Wendy Perera, Christopher Potter and Colin Rowland

183. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meetings held on 8 February 2024 and 15 February 2024 be approved.

184. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest

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

A written question was received from Mr S Cowley (PQ-05/24) regarding the sale of former Yarmouth Primary School. A written response was read out by the leader.

A verbal question was asked by Cameron Palin regarding the Cowes floating bridge. The Leader indicated that a response would be provided later in the meeting when the agenda item was discussed.

186. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman announced that he had spent the day with government representatives in Ryde to discuss how £20 million could be spent through the Town Board over the next ten years.

187. Report of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

187a Director of Public Health Annual Report - Childhood Obesity - Call to Action

There was a statutory requirement to produce and publish an annual report. This year the subject chosen was healthy weight for Island children. The report would support of the campaign for free healthy school meals for all primary age children and would help towards the food poverty agenda. This was one of the most significant public health challenges. An action plan would be developed to tackle the issues.

RESOLVED:

To note the content of the report.

To endorse the ambition within the Annual Report which acknowledges the significant challenge we face in respect to rising levels of childhood overweight and obesity, the multi-faceted causes, the impacts and system wide collaboration required to halt the worsening trend.

187b A Smokefree Generation

£2,547,480 had been granted to procure a new prevention/cessation service, with support for those wishing to stop smoking, and discouraging vaping for those who do not already smoke. This would be funded for four years. It was report that ten per cent of the island's population were smokers and members noted the cost to the economy of £114.1 million.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet approves the spend of up to a maximum amount of £2,547,480 on procuring a new smoking cessation and prevention service over a period of seven years.

Cabinet approves for the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, and Director of Public Health to sign the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control.

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

188a Determine School Academic Year/Term Dates for 2025/2026

The current pattern of school term dates had been set in 2019/2020 with a two-week half term in October. A similar pattern had been set for the year 2025/26. In response to a query over whether the two-week October break affected educational standards, confirmation was given that a new education strategy was to be prepared and this matter would be featured in discussions. It was hoped that a draft would be made available by the end of the summer term.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approves the proposed calendar for term dates 2025/2026 'as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

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

189a Concessionary Travel Reimbursement 2024-25

During the COVID pandemic a system of reimbursement had been introduced by the DfT which was set at the level which had been in place for the preceding 12 months. The DfT now required local authorities to return to actual cost reimbursement, to be repaid at an agreed rate.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given to return to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) direct reimbursement principles that operators should be no better or worse off as a result of the Scheme and that reimbursements shall be determined by the number of concessionary travel journeys undertaken on the relevant operator's local bus services.

That approval be given to maintain the existing discretionary enhancements as detailed in this report for the next financial year 2024/2025.

And that delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy and the Section 151 Officer, to prepare and implement the Concessionary Fares Scheme reimbursement arrangements for the 2024/25 financial year.

189b Cowes Medina Crossing

The matter of the floating bridge had been ongoing for several years and was coming to a conclusion. The report had been considered by Corporate Scrutiny and the recommendations from that meeting were noted. The Chairman brought a revised recommendation to the meeting which was read out. Due process would have to be followed in procuring a replacement vessel and discussions were already underway with officers and '3S'. It was noted that a decision at this time did not commit the council to any current additional financial burden.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet agrees and resolves to replace the current floating bridge. Cabinet agrees to accept the recommendations set out in the Cabinet report as an indicative process.

Utilising previous work carried out in respect of the floating bridge over recent years, Cabinet agree that this information should be used to inform the next stage to ensure the necessary work is carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This will include working with the consultants “3S”, who have supported the recent review and who have extensive knowledge of the process and background. 3S will positively support the stated aim and project to replace the floating bridge going forward.

The scope of their work is to be agreed between Cabinet, officers and 3S.

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

191. Draft Island Planning Strategy

The matter of the Island Plan had been going on for seven years with a great deal of consultation during that time. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had made comments relating to the timeliness of signing off Section 106 agreements and aspects relating to the use of council owned sites for socially affordable homes for rent.

The recommendations from Corporate Scrutiny would result in the following changes to the Draft IPS document attached at Appendix 1:

1. Addition of the following sentence within Appendix 3 of the Draft IPS (Site specific requirements) to all IOW Council owned allocations (HA002, HA031 (part), HA037, HA044, HA078, HA080 & HA084):

“As the site is owned by the Isle of Wight Council, the council should seek to bring forward the land through an appropriate council housing delivery vehicle that maximises the number of social homes affordable to island residents.”

2. Revision to paragraph 6.38 that supports policy G5 ‘Ensuring planning permissions are delivered’ to read:

“6.38 To help ensure that proposals for development are implemented in a timely manner, the council will consider imposing a planning condition providing that development must begin within a timescale shorter than the relevant default period, where this would expedite the development without threatening its deliverability or viability. Any delays will take account of the preparation of S106 legal agreements. The local planning authority considers that where a planning obligation, such as a Section 106 agreement, is required it should be completed in a timely manner. Should Planning Committee resolve to approve a planning application and the obligation has not been completed within six months of the resolution, the decision may be referred back to Planning Committee for reconsideration.”

The Leader was aware of further advice received regarding the demographic information. It was noted that members were keen to move things forward and that following Full Council, if approved to move to regulation 19, there would be a four-week period during which further amendments could be made.

The Leader undertook to “request and hold an extraordinary Full Council meeting during that four-week period should that new demographic information indicate a different view on exceptional circumstances when it is received.”

Concern was expressed that Full Council would not be able to reconsider the decision within six months, however the Leader gave an undertaking that he would ensure enough members would call for the extra meeting.

Concern was also expressed regarding paragraph 6.15 in relation to allocated sites and whether it was the intention of the council to remove the right from the planning committee to grant planning permission in principle, and restrict the committee to the design, density and potential impact. It was suggested that this paragraph be made clearer and remove any ambiguity.

RESOLVED:

To agree some of the Full Council recommended changes, all of the recommended changes from the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration and all of the recommendations from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee* to the draft Island Planning Strategy as attached at Appendix 1; and then

To recommend to Full Council that the draft Island Planning Strategy be approved and published for the Regulation 19 period for public representation and then submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination; and

To recommend to Full Council to delegate any final editorial and presentational changes to the Island Planning Strategy prior to publication and submission, to the Director of Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal Protection and Flooding, so long as they do not materially alter the intention of the version agreed by Full Council.

192. **Cabinet Member Announcements**

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal Protection and Flooding reported that there had been further ground movement at St Lawrence. The Cabinet member had attended a very lively public meeting at Bonchurch. So many residents had been impacted and the area was being closely monitored. The ground was still very wet so it was not over yet. The Leader sent well wishes to those badly affected. The Leader added that he hoped those residents asking for public money to be spent on reinstating Undercliff Drive at considerable cost would realise that this would be a foolish move with all the recent landslides in the area.

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure reported that she had represented the Island at the Round Table for the Summer Reading Challenge with Lord Parkinson. It was noted that Rob Jones head of the Libraries Service who would be retiring from the library service at the end of the month after many years. Expressions of Interest were expected the following day for the Newport guildhall. The Cabinet member had been working with the Leader and

others from Southampton and Portsmouth on the ending of the Solent LEP. A draft cultural plan for the Solent area was to be produced.

The Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, Community Protection and ICT reported that Community Action IW had provided some training with partners regarding the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults, and would circulate some information to the Cabinet. She had also attended the Fire Service conference in Bristol and would provide an update at Full Council.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health reported that much concern had been expressed on the closing of the WOW centre. The Cabinet member had attended a meeting with the principal of the Domestic Abuse service commissioned by the Council and was working with Cllrs S Redrup and K Lucioni and would be going to visit the facility. On 22 April the Gouldings reablement centre would be officially opened. It was already proving beneficial for residents and was helping them to remain independent for as long as possible.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Corporate Functions reported that the Youth Conference was coming up. The new Children's Services leadership team had now all been appointed, with the final postholder due to start the following week. All would be based on the Island. A long-term education strategy was being prepared, with 6 months of public engagement starting in April. No decisions regarding school place planning would be made until after that period.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance reported that the Exceptional Hardship Fund had been reinstated after cross chamber agreement had been reached. It was planned to look at smaller developments for affordable housing.

193. Consideration of the Forward Plan

The contents of the Forward Plan were noted with no amendment.

194. Members' Question Time

A written question was received from Cllr M Lilley (MQ-11/24) regarding Ryde Arena. A response was read out by the Leader.

Cllr K Love asked whether the Leader would seek reassurance regarding the Red Funnel ferry service, as it had been reported that eight directors had resigned, and whether this would impact on the development in East Cowes. The Leader confirmed that he would be seeking such assurance, and that the CEO of Red Funnel had offered to meet with him as soon as possible.

195. Exclusion of Public and Press

The Committee determined not to go into private session to discuss the following two items, as they agreed that there would be no discussion regarding any of the detail in the confidential appendices to the reports.

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

196a Sale of the former Weston Academy, Weston Road, Totland, Isle of Wight

The site had been empty since 2014. Brownfield Land Release Funding had been made available for the site, and bids received had been evaluated in the confidential appendix. Assurance was given that the correct process had been followed.

RESOLVED:

To sell the former Weston Academy site to the preferred bidder based on the offer attached at exempt Appendix 2, to pay the preferred bidder the BLRF grant available for this site, and to delegate approval of the final terms of the sale to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance.

196b Disposal of the former Yarmouth Primary School, Yarmouth

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had welcomed the style of the report which was the result of a lot of work by officers, resulting in a very good offer being made. It was noted that the final terms of sale were proposed to be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance.

RESOLVED:

To approve in principle the disposal of the former Yarmouth CE Primary School site to bidder D based on the proposal attached at exempt Appendix 2, subject to Department for Education Section 77 consent being granted and heads of terms being agreed, and to delegate approval of the final terms of the sale to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance.

CHAIRMAN