

Minutes

Name of meeting	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and Time	TUESDAY 16 JULY 2024 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs C Mosdell (Chair), P Spink (Vice-Chairman), G Brodie, C Critchison, R Downer, J Lever and N Stuart
Also Present	Cllrs P Jordan, J Bacon, P Fuller, J Jones-Evans and K Lucioni, C Jarman and E Blake Sharon Betts, Wendy Perera, Christopher Potter, Colin Rowland, Peter Smith, Megan Tuckwell, Melanie White, Ashley Whittaker and Simon Wiggins Simon Richards (Schools Forum)
Also Present (Virtual)	Natasha Dix, Alex Minns and Claire Shand
Apologies	Cllr W Drew, Simon Cooke (IWALC)

12 Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)

Cllr Nick Stuart was in attendance as a substitute for Cllr Michael Lilley.

Apologies had been received from Cllr Warren Drew and Simon Cooke (IWALC).

13 Minutes

The chairman invited non-committee members to make comment. Discussion took place regarding the minutes of the last meeting, with regards to the level of detail under Minute item 6 (Progress Update, regarding leisure centres) and Minute item 8 (Ryde Town Board). It was agreed that one grammatical amendment would be made; the removal of the duplicate word 'Holbrook' listed as an attendee on page 1. Following discussion, it was proposed and duly seconded; and it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2024 be confirmed as a true record, subject to a grammatical amendment (removal of the duplicate word 'Holbrook' on page 1).

14 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received at this stage.

15 Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

No public questions were received.

16 General Exception Decisions/Urgent Decisions

Nothing to report.

17 Progress Update

The chairman introduced the report which provided an overview of the progress against actions and outcomes from previous meetings. No questions or comments were raised.

The chairman invited non-committee members to make comment. Cllr Chris Jarman asked that the completed action arising from 12 February 2024 be reopened (the Leader providing the chairman with a copy of his email instructing staff to provide councillors with any information needed in developing alternative budgets).

RESOLVED:

THAT the progress report be noted.

18 Committee's Workplan:

18a Forward Plan

18b Committee's Work Programme

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. No comments or questions were raised at this stage.

RESOLVED:

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

19 Review of the Cabinet Agenda

The committee received the agenda items due for consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on 18 July 2024.

Cabinet agenda item 5a – School Place Planning

Consideration was given to the report which sought the Cabinet's approval of the publication of the draft School Place Planning Strategy, and the review of the level of surplus school places and special educational needs provision on the Island. The vice-chairman of the Schools Forum, Mr Simon Richards, was in attendance to make comments on behalf of school governors. Comments had been received from the chairman of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills, and it was noted that a meeting of that committee had been arranged to consider this item in detail on 23 July 2024.

Discussion took place regarding the strategy which had been developed to improve education standards and outcomes for children on the Island. Questions were raised regarding the whole-Island approach, parental choice, elective home education figures, financial pressures and inherited debts, potential home-to-school transport costs, housing developments, a timeline of next steps, and the current government funding model.

Cabinet agenda item 6a - Better Care Fund 2023–2025 Midway Update

The committee received the report which asked the Cabinet to note the Better Care Fund 2023-2025 mid-way submission. No comments or questions were raised.

Cabinet agenda item 7a - A3056 Speed Limits Review TRO

Consideration was given to the report which proposed a reduction in the speed limits on the highway between Newport and Sandown (A3056). The chairman thanked Island Roads for discussing the proposals in detail with the local town and parish councils. The committee welcomed the report and the Leader confirmed that a full Island-Wide speed review would commence in Autumn 2024.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Cabinet agenda items be received and noted.

20 Cross-Solent Ferry Operators

The committee received the report which provided information on the role and powers of the council as the Local Transport Authority, cross-Solent contingency plans, and the limitations and challenges regarding cross-Solent ferry operators. The chairman of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Health and Social Care provided a statement from a health and patient travel perspective. It was assured that this matter remained on the committee's workplan.

Questions were raised and discussion took place regarding the criteria for government subsidised or operated ferry services and public service obligations. Comments were made regarding the offshore distance and the economic impact on the Island as a result of unreliable ferry travel. The Leader highlighted the ways in which the council had sought advice, including contact with the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

The committee acknowledged the limited ways in which the council could manage the situation, and highlighted there was now a fresh opportunity to work with the two newly elected MPs to have a stronger voice in government. The committee requested that the Cabinet formally write to the Islands two MPs in calling for a review into ferry travel. It was agreed that a copy of this correspondence would be circulated to all councillors.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be received and noted.

21 Kingston Marine Park

The committee received an update on the ongoing negotiations between the council and Medina Studios Limited, following the freehold sale of Kingston Marine Park in November 2022. The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure offered a private briefing to members of the committee and advised that progress was being made on a daily basis; a further update was anticipated shortly and could be provided to the committee at its next meeting in September 2024. The chairman advised that this item would be referred to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration for future monitoring.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be received and noted.

22 Leisure Centres

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure presented the report which provided the committee with an update on the recovery of the Leisure facilities to provide assurances that they were once again generating revenue for the council. It was agreed that a link to the Local Government Association's report on sport and leisure, promoting health and wellbeing through public services, would be circulated to the committee.

It was noted that a copy of the confidential presentation on leisure centres (which had been delivered to the Cabinet informally in 2022 by an external consultants) had been circulated to committee members by Cllr Chris Jarman.

Discussion took place regarding the future of leisure centres and whether there would be a review of the services being offered to members (particularly spa facilities), and the balance between operating commercially and offering a service for the benefit to of the community and public health. Questions were raised around the projected financial deficit due to the cost of utilities, the use of solar panels on leisure buildings, and the potential for adding solar panels to car parks.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be received and noted.

23 Performance Management Framework

The committee received the report which provided an update on the progress made in the last year, following a refresh of the Isle of Wight Performance Management Framework, specifically the further improvements made in the process and delivery of information to include automation, metric refresh, Power BI licencing and working across directorates. It was suggested that a development session on this topic be arranged for all councillors, as this topic would underpin future quarterly performance reporting.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be received and noted.

24 Members' Question Time

Cllr Chris Jarman asked an oral question in relation to the finances of secondary schools and multi-academy trusts, and the reflection of this within the council's own budget. The chairman advised that this question should be put in writing to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Childrens Services, Education and Skills in order for a full response to be provided.

Cllr Chris Jarman asked an oral question in relation to confidentiality agreements between the Cabinet and third parties, and whether any legal wording would be amended ahead of the move to a committee system of governance from May 2025. The Chief Executive confirmed that this would be considered, and the chairman advised that this matter should be put in writing to the Audit and Governance Committee in order for a full response to be provided.

CHAIRMAN