

Minutes

Name of meeting	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and Time	TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2024 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, K Love, C Mosdell, C Quirk and S Redrup
Also Present	Cllrs P Jordan, P Fuller, K Lucioni and L Peacey-Wilcox, C Jarman Natasha Dix, Colin Rowland, Megan Tuckwell and Melanie White Steve Reynolds and John Springate (3S Business Review Ltd)
Also Present (Virtual)	Cllrs D Andre and J Jones-Evans Lesley Kinnear, Wendy Perera and Claire Shand
Apologies	Simon Cooke (IWALC)

84 Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)

Apologies had been received from Simon Cooke (IWALC).

85 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Lora Peacey-Wilcox declared an interest in Minute item 89 (Cowes Floating Bridge) as a user of the service. The chairman noted that a number of those present would be floating bridge service users.

86 Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

Sharon Lake of East Cowes Town Council asked an oral question in relation to the accuracy of the data on the frequency and reliability of the floating bridge. It was advised that this would be covered during the discussion and presentation at Minute item 89. A supplementary question was asked, seeking assurance that future engineers would be able to ensure that any new vessel could meet the frequency requirements. It was advised that this would be covered during the discussion and presentation at Minute item 89.

Tracy Reardon of East Cowes Town Council asked an oral question regarding the timeline for if-and-when the council would decide to procure a new floating bridge. It was advised that the next steps would be outlined in a report which was being prepared for the Cabinet at its meeting in March 2024.

Cameron Palin of East Cowes Town Council asked an oral question in relation to whether the draft floating bridge report, prepared for the council by 3S Business Review Limited, would be shared with East Cowes Town Council. It was agreed that the report would be circulated.

87 Progress Update

The committee received the report which provided an overview of the progress against actions and outcomes from previous meetings. No comments or questions were raised at this stage.

RESOLVED:

THAT the progress report be noted.

88 Committee's Workplan:

88a Forward Plan

88b Committee's Work Programme

Consideration was given to the work programme and the committee were invited to identify any item contained within the forward plan that would benefit from early consideration by the committee.

The chairman advised that the Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2022-23 would not be available for the next meeting and had therefore been slipped from March to May 2024. It was confirmed that the committee would receive a copy of the floating bridge report to Cabinet at its next meeting in March 2024.

The chairman advised that agenda items on Future Governance had been added to the committees workplan for March and May 2024 for pre-scrutiny, prior to consideration by the Full Council.

The vice-chairman raised concern that confidential exemptions were being used inappropriately by staff, despite the matter being previously considered by the committee at its meeting in January 2024. Discussion took place regarding a future report on the council's approach to confidentiality, and it was requested that an item on this matter be added to the workplan for the next meeting. Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the topic of confidentiality be added to the committee's workplan for consideration at a future meeting (May 2024).

89 Cowes Floating Bridge

Consideration was given to the Floating Bridge operational review, prepared for the Isle of Wight Council by 3S Business Review Limited. The committee received a presentation which outlined the scope of the review, the main issues with the existing vessel, any required design changes, the conclusions reached during the review, and alternative solutions.

Discussion took place with regards to the activities undertaken as part of the review, including the data on the delays between departure after boarding, building a computerised fluid dynamics digital model (replicating the vessels response to extreme wind and tidal forces), and the dimensional comparisons between FB5 and FB6.

Questions were raised regarding the operational performance of the existing vessel, possible modifications, the chain depth issue, the use of a push boat, and environmental changes.

The committee received information on the potential options for procuring a new vessel, the benefits to this, and how it would be paid for. This included the preparatory work required, principal pre-procurement work packages, prequalification, invitation to tender, and the ongoing contract management activities.

Questions were raised regarding the timeline for moving forward. It was confirmed that a report was being prepared for the Cabinet (setting out the process for commissioning an options appraisal for alternative solutions to the current vessel), which would be presented to the committee at its next meeting on 12 March 2024.

RESOLVED:

THAT the floating bridge operational review, prepared for the Isle of Wight Council by 3S Business Review Limited, be noted.

90 Members' Question Time

Cllr Peter Spink asked an oral question in relation to the floating bridge options report being prepared for the Cabinet in March 2024, and whether the mediation settlement figure would be disclosed to the committee as part of the financial analysis of future options. The Leader confirmed that the settlement was subject to a non-disclosure agreement and would not be shared.

Cllr Peter Spink asked an oral question in relation to whether the current chairman of the committee would be allowed to view the confidential floating bridge settlement figure. The Leader confirmed that the chairman would not be permitted to view it. The chairman noted that a previous request to view the settlement had been rejected in 2023 and he would not be seeking to make another request at this stage.

Cllr Peter Spink asked an oral question referring to a request made at the last meeting to provide the chairman with a copy an email sent regarding the preparation of alternative budgets, and whether this would be disclosed before the Full Council on 28 February 2024. The Leader advised that this could be shared with the chairman in due course but would not be available the next working day.

CHAIRMAN