



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION
Date and Time	THURSDAY 8 JULY 2021 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs K Lucioni (Chairman), J Lever, J Medland, T Outlaw and C Quirk
Also Present (Non voting)	Cllrs J Bacon, M Beston, V Churchman, S Hastings, I Ward
Officers Present	Stewart Chandler, Ashley Curzon, Wendy Perera, Colin Rowland, Stewart Chandler, David Newton, Claire Shand and Paul Thistlewood

1. Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2021 be confirmed.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman declared an interest in Item 5 (Ryde Transport Interchange) as she was the local Councillor for the area.

3. Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

There were no written questions received.

Cathy Foulkes of Ryde asked an oral question regarding the Ryde Interchange, and requested to know what had prevented earlier release of the consultation document, and what advice had been received regarding Highways cutting across public land.

The Director of Neighbourhoods advised that the questions would be covered in the presentation for that item.

As Ms Foulkes did not believe her question had been fully answered, a supplementary question was asked later in the meeting regarding public spaces within the scheme, which the Chairman advised would receive a written response.

4. **Bus Service Improvement Plan**

This was a government initiative with funding available to improve bus provision. The council would be required to enter into an enhanced partnership with local bus providers by March 2022. The first part of the process had been agreed by Cabinet in June. This report was an analysis of the current services and improvements that could be made, including investment in key corridors and bus priority measures. The scheme would integrate with the active travel initiative. The council would work with commercial operators with an aim to decarbonise the fleet. If the DfT believed the Improvement Plan was aspirational enough, it would invest, and this could reduce fares and improve the fleet.

Clarification was given that although the budget was transferred to Hampshire Council's commercial services, the IW council had a responsible officer who would ensure that the island's needs were taken into account.

Once funding had been agreed, extra capacity would be considered and further funding would be available for extra staff.

In response to a question from the committee as to whether there would be any subsidy for rural areas to ensure convenience, it was confirmed that there was up to £4 million available, however it was not known yet how much the IW would receive. There would be engagement with community bus operators.

It was hoped that all councillors would be involved, and the committee expressed the wish to volunteer for any pilot schemes.

The draft Bus Service and Improvement Plan would be published by the end of October 2021 and would be brought back to members of the committee for any comments prior to submission.

RESOLVED:

- a) The Committee supported establishing an Enhanced Partnership advising the Department for Transport of the Council's intention and publication of the required formal notice by the end of June 2021.
- b) The draft Bus Service Improvement Plan to be circulated to the Committee for comment before submission to the Department for Transport by 31 October 2021.

5. **Ryde Transport Interchange**

A bid had been made in 2018 as part of the Transforming Cities Fund with a package of improvements across Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight. There was now £10 million available to the island, and the Ryde Interchange project could be done within that budget. Measures for improved walking, cycling and public transport were outlined.

Improvements to the train station area would be led by SW Rail and would be phased to minimise disruption. In the event that there was any delay, temporary toilets would be installed. Wightlink would be the lead for improvements to the Pier

Earlier consultation had not been carried out because the existing designs had not met the current needs and issues. The removal of the toilets and pier café would improve the view of the pier and was part of the bigger regeneration of Ryde. Where planning permission was required, it had been granted and the council had permitted development rights on the highway and adjacent land.

In response to questions clarification was given that the amount of pedestrian space would be almost doubled, with narrower crossings. Staff had been talking to local people for their views on how best to enhance the area.

The consultation would evaluate the advantages and disadvantages in relation to parking on the Esplanade. A feeder taxi rank on the landward side of the Esplanade would be in view of the pier. It was hoped to build out the pavements to enhance the 'café culture', but this would be looked at more closely as the consultation progressed. Some feedback had already been received.

The Committee felt it was important to listen to all comments and suggestions and to make clear to the local community that comments on all aspects of the scheme would be welcomed.

All responses to the consultation would be shared with the Committee.

RESOLVED :-

- a) That the council ensure that it is made clear to the local community that comments on all aspects of the Ryde Transport Interchange scheme are welcomed as part of the Public.
- b) The Director of Neighbourhoods agreed to circulate to the Committee the responses received to the consultation process.

6. **Digital Strategy**

An update was given on the progress with the implementation of the Digital Strategy. The Committee's attention was drawn in particular to the recent approval of ERDF funding of £1.4 million for Innovation Wight, a new business centre and support facility based at a council site in Cowes. It would support many businesses and it was hoped to be open in January 2022. Business advisors would also be situated at hubs across the island.

The Committee were also informed that the council were working with the IW College to undertake a skills audit which should be completed in September. Consideration was being given to setting up a coding school.

The Committee were asked to provide a steer on the next steps, particularly in the communications and stakeholder element of the strategy. The Committee would discuss this further and would advise the Cabinet Member as necessary.

RESOLVED :

- a) The committee noted the progress with the implementation of the Digital Island – Isle of Wight Digital Strategy.
- b) The committee would discuss further the next steps particularly in the communications and stakeholder engagement element of the strategy and advise the cabinet member accordingly.

7. Regeneration Strategy Update

An update on progress was given. The council continued to draw in funding for regeneration projects. Ryde and Newport were High Street Heritage Action Zones, and Cowes and Northwood had completed place plans. A bid had been submitted to the Levelling Up Fund for East Cowes for a broad range of activities, and the Committee would be informed of the outcome. Business cases were being built in readiness for any funding opportunities.

Concern was expressed as to whether there were enough staff to deliver all the projects. The staff were currently spread across different teams.

A list of current projects was requested and their current status, along with timescales for completion with realistic objectives. The Cabinet Member would bring this information to the next meeting in October, along with an update on further progress.

RESOLVED :

- a) Progress with the implementation of the strategy was noted.
- b) A more detailed report, as previously supplied to the Committee, showing the various elements of all the regeneration schemes should be made available for future meetings.
- c) The importance of town and parish councils place plans in the delivery of the regeneration strategy was highlighted.

8. Committee's Work Plan

The workplan had been produced by the previous Committee. The chairman suggested that the new Committee had an informal meeting in the next few weeks to discuss any key topics not already on the workplan for scrutiny over the next 1 – 2 years. It was recognised that affordable housing was desperately needed on the island and that the Committee should look at the production of relevant policies.

RESOLVED :

- a) The workplan should include an item looking at the delivery of the affordable housing strategy.
- b) An informal meeting of the committee to be held to discuss future workplan items for submission to the next meeting.

9. **Members' Question Time**

No Members' questions were received.

CHAIRMAN