



# Minutes

Name of meeting	<b>CABINET</b>
Date and Time	<b>THURSDAY 12 MAY 2022 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM</b>
Venue	<b>CONFERENCE ROOM 5, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Present	Cllrs L Peacey-Wilcox (Chairman), D Andre, J Bacon, P Fuller, C Jarman, J Jones-Evans, P Jordan, K Love and I Stephens
Also Present (Non voting)	Cllrs R Downer, S Ellis and P Spink
Officers Present	Christopher Ashman, Steve Crocker, Christopher Potter, Claire Shand and Sharon Betts

## 113. **Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022 be approved.

## 114. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Debbie Andre declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item relating to the Wildheart Trust as she was the local member for the area and also a member of Sandown Town Council, and would not be taking part in the voting on that item.

Cllr Chris Jarman declared an interest in the item relating to Wightcare as he was responsible for the management of his father's care plan.

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

Written questions had been received from Dominic Coughlin (PQ 33-22) relating to the school term dates report and Diane Barker (PQ 34-22) relating to school place planning and the future of Chillerton and Rookley school.

Responses were given by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills.

116. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman thanked Cabinet members and members of staff for working long hours to bring actions in the Corporate Plan to fruition.

117. **Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills**

Local authorities were required to prepare and publish a statement every year. The policy had last been reviewed in 2021 and it had not been deemed necessary to make any changes this year.

117a **Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2022**

Local Authorities were required to prepare and publish a statement each year. The existing policy had last been reviewed in 2021 and it was not believed that any changes were required this year.

117b **Determine the pattern of School Term and Holiday Dates for 2023/24**

Further consultation had taken place, with over 3250 responses from a broad range of people including, school staff, parents and businesses. The majority, including school staff, were in support of a two-week half term break.

It was noted that the first day of the school year would be Friday 1 September 2023 and it was hoped that schools would take this as a development day, returning to school on Monday 4 September 2023. Although the council did not set the term dates for school outside the local authority's control it was hoped that all schools would follow the same date pattern. Information would be put onto the council's website advising parents to check with their own school which day they would return to school.

118. **Report of the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance, Corporate Resources and Transformational Change**

118a **To Treat the Wildheart Trust (formerly Sandown Zoo) as a special purchaser for an area of council land adjacent to their site**

Cllr Andre took no part in the voting on this item.

The comments of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee were noted, that this would allow the council to undertake further negotiations with the Trust before any final decision was taken on the disposal of the land.

118b **Commercial Strategy**

This was the start of a process of transformational change, the council becoming more opportunistic, with a more business-like way of thinking. It was a route forward for a change in policies and attitude and there would be some training needed for staff. Community wealth-building had been included as this would support the local economy and help local businesses.

### 118c **Wightcare Business Unit - Business Model Development**

It was intended to move forward with the fee increases identified in the February 2022 budget and for the Wightcare service to be reviewed as a discrete business identity. Consultation had taken place and 73% of respondents would prefer to see a fee increase as long as the same level of service was maintained. It was important that the service did not continue to be subsidised from elsewhere in the Adult Social Care budget. It was noted that 2200 people currently used the service and there was a lot of potential to enhance the services provided. The fees had not increased since 2018 and this had left a 36% gap in the budget which would need to be made up gradually with the aim of reaching a 'break even' point.

The comments of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee were noted.

### 118d **Bereavement Services Business Unit - Business Model Development**

The intention was to review the current business model for bereavement services and create a business unit which would include cremations, burials and the management of graveyard sites. It was noted that there had recently been a large hike in energy prices. An 'all options' analysis would be undertaken, and it was confirmed that burials at sea would also be included. There had been an amendment to the published appendix containing the fees and charges for cremations and burials, which had been circulated to the Cabinet members and this would be amended online.

The Leader declared an interest at this point as she had purchased a burial plot from the council.

Consideration would need to be given to a four-fold increase in energy prices, including those coming in October 2022 and anticipate the increase in the fees.

### 119. **Report of the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Digital Transformation, Housing provision and Housing Needs**

#### 119a **Hackney Carriage Table of Fares**

Council officers had met with the taxi trade association and they had requested an increase in fares. The fares had not been raised since 2014 and were last reviewed in 2019 when there was only one small change. There was a need to ensure that fares were affordable but ensured a reliable service. The recent increase in fuel prices was noted.

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee had noted that there was a need to ensure that fares were clearly displayed and that they were the maximum that could be charged.

### 120. **Cabinet Member Announcements**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Community Engagement reported that the Queen's speech earlier in the week had mentioned proposals for the Levelling Up Act which was proposed for 2024. The main points would be circulated to councillors the following week. Officers would scrutinise the proposals as they went through parliament. The Cabinet member would continue to liaise with the Island's MP.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills reported that the government papers on education and SEN services had been received and the implication for the Island were being looked at. Recommendations would be reported back.

The Cabinet Member had attended a very impressive Young Enterprise Event in which seven schools had taken part including St Catherine's school. The result was yet to be announced. The Cabinet Member would also be attending the Child of Wight award ceremony.

Several Ukrainian families had been welcomed to the island. This would bring extra pressure to children's services and progress would be monitored.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health reported that it was currently Mental Health Week. He had attended an event at the hospital at which mental health services were promoted.

The Health and Care Bill had received Royal Assent on 28 April and guidance was awaited on its implementation.

The workforce in Adult Social Care had slightly improved. There had been some positive initiatives with the NHS.

MAD-AID, based in East Cowes had worked with several voluntary groups and individuals to transport 11 truck loads of aid to Moldova and GP surgeries and the hospice had donated a lot of equipment. The Cabinet Member himself had been to visit the country to see the work being carried out there.

The Cabinet Member for Community Protection, Digital Transformation, Housing Provision and Housing Needs reported that the white paper on fire had been given Royal Assent. There would be a fire safety and prevention document coming forward. He was still working with the fire authority and the PCC to try and get a One Public Estate blue light centre.

Since the Island Plan core strategy in 2012 there had been a shortfall of 1244 homes. There were currently 2466 homes needed on the housing list. Five rough sleepers were currently being cared for. There had been an annual increase of 19% in empty properties since 2019. 121 of these had been empty for more than two years. It was hoped that the housing problems may be alleviated by working within the empty property strategy to try and bring some back into use.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment, Heritage and Waste reported that work was ongoing in developing the Climate Change strategy and bringing biosphere principles into actions taken.

The household battery recycling facility was now available to the public who could put batteries out with their general waste.

The Cabinet Member for Highways PFI, Transport and Infrastructure reported that free parking for NHS patients travelling to the mainland for treatment had been put in place. It was hoped that this would extend to ferry travel in the future. There was to be two hours free parking in Newport starting in two weeks' time.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Tourism and Business Development reported that she would be going to Southampton to represent the Island for the City of Culture bid. The judges would be in Southampton all day and it was hoped there would be a chance to promote the island and its links with Southampton.

A visit had been carried out to the Innovation Wight centre at Northwood which was intended to be opened at the end of June 2022.

There was to be a 'Celebrate Ryde' event on 14 May in conjunction with Ryde Town Council.

There was to be another chance to bid in the next round of Levelling Up. Any bids had to be transport related. Options were currently being considered and a report would be presented to Cabinet in June.

It was disappointing that the Island had only received £1 million from the Shared Prosperity Fund which was less than hoped for. A report would be presented to Cabinet in July to decide how the funds would be spent.

Leisure centres were seeing a 67% recovery of One Card users. Medina Theatre had seen an increase of more than 1000 people this April than in April 2018 or 2019.

#### 121. **Consideration of the Forward Plan**

The item relating to the future of Chillerton and Rookley School was to be removed from the Forward Plan as the school was to remain open.

#### 122. **Members' Question Time**

No written questions were received.

Cllr Spink asked an oral question on the matter of public and members' questions not being on the agenda for previous meetings, and said that some residents were concerned that this had been purposely done to stifle discussion on the Island Planning Strategy and asked whether the Leader took those concerns seriously.

The Leader confirmed that the concerns were taken seriously.

Cllr Spink asked a supplementary question as to whether it was in the public interest to therefore have a full investigation as to what decisions were made, by whom and in what order.

The Leader indicated that a written response would be sent.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment, Heritage and Waste said that the Monitoring Officer had been clear at the Corporate Scrutiny meeting on 10 May that there was a gap in the Constitution and that there would not have been breach of the rules had the meetings actually taken place, which they did not.

CHAIRMAN