



Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date	7 FEBRUARY 2023
Topic	COWES FLOATING BRIDGE

BACKGROUND

At the 11 January 2022 committee meeting it was agreed that an item relating to Cowes Floating Bridge be included in the workplan after the outcome of the mediation was known. A confidential settlement was reached in October 2022 and the committee raised concerns relating to the outcome of the mediation process and the future of the vessel.

It was agreed that responses to the below questions, agreed at the November committee meeting, would be considered in the first instance at an informal meeting of the Committee on 31 January 2023, prior to including the item on the agenda for a formal meeting where the Chairman would report back on outcomes.

FOCUS FOR SCRUTINY

- Could details of the timeline for approving the arrangements for the mediation process be provided, including who was authorised within the Council to lead this and how approval was given to the acceptance of the mediation outcome?
- Why was a non-disclosure agreement made and who authorised this?
- Why were the Committee, and other councillors, not informed of the outcome before the media was advised?
- Was the decision to accept the outcome of the mediation a 'key decision'?
- What further actions were required in connection with the effective operation of the existing vessel, and what steps were being taken to consider a replacement?
- How would any financial settlement be shown in the Council's budget?
- Would the briefing note provided to group leaders on Cowes Floating bridge be made available to all councillors?

The Committee to review the report submitted to the Solent LEP in relation to the point from Appendix 9 – Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport in the Q2 Performance Reports. It states on page 80 – “The mediation agreement for the contract dispute around Floating Bridge 6 has been successfully concluded and the Gateway 5 Review action plan has been fully delivered. A report setting out the options for resolving issues with chain clearances and vessel deviation were submitted to the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership. The shortlisted options are:

- Chain system alterations
- Thrusters
- Continued use of the push boat

The replacement of Floating Bridge 6 with a new vessel remains a possible fall-back option.”

APPROACH

The Chairman will provide a summary of the discussions that took place at the informal briefing.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

None.

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