



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION
Date and Time	THURSDAY 5 JANUARY 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs J Lever (Chairman), J Medland (Vice-Chairman), M Beston, R Downer, C Quirk and I Ward
Also Present (Non voting)	Ian Griffiths, Will Myles
Officers Present	Christopher Ashman and Oliver Boulter, Sarah Philipsborn, Paul Thistlewood and Melanie White

25. Apologies and Changes in Membership (if any)

None received

26. Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022 be approved.

THAT the summary of the meeting held on 6 October 2022 be noted.

27. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Beston declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6, stating that his wife was a Director of Visit Isle of Wight.

Cllr John Medland declared that he was Chairman of the Planning Committee and involved in the LGA Peer Review. Item 10

28. Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

There were no public questions received

29. **Progress on outcomes and recommendations from previous meetings**

It was stated that there was the need to chase up the Housing Strategy Update and report back to the Committee

The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport explained that there was a draft report regarding the Local Transport Plan, coming to the Committee in the spring, with consultation in the summer and potential implementation in 2024. It was explained that the reason it was still in draft mode was due to the fact that they were waiting for guidance from Government to advise on some of the regulations that needed to be integrated into the plan.

It was stated that although Southampton was unsuccessful in its bid for City of Culture, work was continuing to develop links of cultural importance between the Island and Southampton, and that a cultural strategy was on schedule for the spring. An informal meeting of the committee would be set in the late spring to begin the scrutiny of the strategy.

30. **Isle of Wight Tourism**

30a **Visit Isle of Wight**

The Managing Director and the Chairman of Visit Isle of Wight presented an update on the 2022 tourist season and the marketing plans for 2023.

The update showed that 2022 had been positive for visitor numbers to the Island. There had been a 2% increase of visitor numbers when comparing figures before Covid and total visitor spend was up 45%.

Visit Britain had also had a positive year in 2022 which had a 6% knock on benefit for the Isle of Wight. It was stated, however, that 2023 was likely to be a tough year.

A new advertising programme 'Say Yes' had been launched, with network advertisements that had been bought in bulk across the various internet sites. This had resulted in 84,635 clicks from August to October 2022.

There were now 2 Walking Festivals per year, one in May and the other in October which generated participation from both Islanders and visitors.

It was stated that it was important to continue targeting the UK accessibility travel market and encourage more businesses to become involved with training.

It was commented that although The Tour of Britain did not come to the Island in 2022, there was the beneficial factor that tour operators were now putting the Island forward as a cycling destination.

In terms of television advertisement, a huge project was launched, on going from Boxing Day until 22 January 2023 with Sky Adsmart. It was hoped that the TV advertisement campaign would challenge perceptions that the Island was stuck in the 1950's as some people would believe.

There was also a targeted mail drop and work with travel operators to offer discounts and prize competitions where trips to the Island could be won. A bid had just gone into Central Government regarding advertising campaigns on UK inbound Ferry Companies with the aim to target the French market.

Visit Isle of Wight was also going to be working with the Mermaid Atlantic Challenge, Greatest Hits Radio and Sainsbury's as well as looking at various expos including the Camping and Caravan Road Show at the NEC in Birmingham.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Report of Visit Isle of Wight be noted.

30b Sustainable and Accessible Tourism Campaign

Progress was reported on the sustainable and accessible tourist campaign indicated in the Corporate Plan with the intention to focus on regenerating the High Street and the visitor economy.

It was explained that the 'Purple pound' was linked to regeneration as this market was underserved and that there was also large market potential in accessibility tourism. It was highlighted important to broaden awareness of this amongst stakeholders and to identify what further support was needed in making the Island a good place to visit in terms of accessibility.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update on the Sustainable and Access Tourism Campaign be noted

31. Survey of Regular Users of Cowes Floating Bridge

An update was given on the Floating Bridge Saver Card Holders survey which was undertaken during summer 2022.

The Survey was closed on 7 September 2022 and 1,188 responses had been received which equated to 23.17% of card holders.

The key findings showed that 43.98% of card holders used the service at least once a week with 79.43% of people making return journeys. The top 3 reasons for using the service were leisure (56.9%), shopping (38.8%) and commuting (31.14%). Foot passengers made up 57.52% of saver card users and car drivers (68.58%)

In order to help Saver Card holders better plan their journeys, the majority of respondents put forward suggestions on how to improve the service which included text/email updates regarding the service, the introduction of a Floating Bridge App, advising Red Runnel if the Floating Bridge service was suspended (so they could advise floating bridge users), and operating to a reliable timetabled service.

An action plan had been devised from the key findings of the survey focusing on the areas of operation, media and communications, staffing and fees/payments. The plan would be implemented in accordance with the timescales set against the individual actions, with the objective of improving the service across all the categories. It was agreed that the survey would come back to the committee annually in order to be able to monitor any trends or service improvements.

Questions were raised if other users should be canvassed for their opinions rather than just Saver Card Holders.

RESOLVED:

THAT the responses from the Saver Card User Survey be noted

THAT the Action Plan be carried out within its set timescales.

THAT the survey returns to scrutiny annually alongside the Action Plan so to monitor trends and service improvements.

32. **Place and Neighbourhood Planning**

A report was presented to the committee regarding the promotion of people-oriented place planning for town centres with the objective that the committee could gain an understanding of Place and Neighbourhood Plans and their use on the Island. It was a important to look feedback on impact and resources and funding, when investigating experiences of places on the Island.

Five areas on the Island had a Neighbourhood Plan- Bembridge, Brading, Brighstone, Freshwater and Gurnard. The cost of developing a Neighbourhood Plan varied from a minimum of £20,000 though actual plan production averaged between £40k - £50k.

A range of other methods to achieve place making and sustainable development existed as alternatives to the time and cost associated with the development of a Neighbourhood Plan and included 'Place Plans'.

Place Plans were described as a process just as much as an output as they brought together local stakeholders, town or parish councils, local businesses community groups to work together with the Isle of Wight Council to identify key issues of concern using data and consultation and the development of an action orientated plan to address the issues.

Three areas on the island had Place Plans and included Newport, Ryde and Cowes/Northwood. Three further councils in The Bay area had also recently committed to work together to develop a Place Plan.

A Place Plan normally takes about 3 months to develop with an average cost of £20,000. It was highlighted that Ryde and Newport had successfully bid for UK Government funds referencing their Place Plans as their evidence base.

The Committee sought clarification that the information contained in the report had been circulated to all town and parish councils to highlight the importance of these plans in shaping the needs of the local area.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Report on Place and Neighbourhood Planning be noted.

33. **The Development of a New Records Office**

The Committee was presented with a vision document regarding the development of a new Records Office.

It was a long-held ambition to develop a new Records Office on the Island, but it was acknowledged that the ideas and vision were unfortunately hamstrung by lack of funds.

The vision document saw the incorporation of a new Records Office within a cultural centre. It was hoped that the building would hold a cultural exhibition area along with other amenities.

It was stated that there needed to be a bid for public funds and that the Council to prioritise these types of projects.

RESOLVED:

THAT the vision document be noted.

34. **Planning**

34a **LGA Planning Peer Review Action Plan**

The Committee received an update on implementing the recommendations from the Local Government Association Peer Review into Planning Services.

It was stated that a planning Services Improvement Steering Group had been established with agreed terms of reference to do drive the improvements that needed to be implemented in response to the report recommendations.

The Steering Group identified 4 key areas to prioritise action-
Progressing the local plan
Improving pre- application advice offer
Improving development management function
Improving enforcement function

Improving trust, learning and customer service were to be at the core of how the issues were to be tackled.

The next steps for the steering group were identified as to continue work on the Road Map Document, and the Improvement Delivery Plan.

Progress would be continued to be publicly shared with regular updates to councillors through this committee and the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and it was agreed that there be six monthly updates on the Action Plan to monitor progress against actions.

RESOLVED:

THAT the LGA Planning Peer Review update be noted.

THAT there be six monthly updates on the Action Plan to enable a regular review against actions.

34b **Planning Enforcement Strategy**

An update was given on the progressing a new Planning Enforcement Strategy and the introduction of a new approach to delivering planning enforcement.

It was stated that the next steps in progressing this strategy were to finalise the new Enforcement Strategy to enable Planning Services to undertake targeted engagement with parish, town and community councils interested in generating capacity to deal with local priorities. Thereafter, the strategy could be brought to Cabinet for consideration.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update on the Planning Enforcement Strategy be noted.

35. **Parking**

35a **Annual Parking Report 2022**

The Annual Parking Report was presented to the Committee. It was stated that parking was a complex issue which was part of the broader policy on transport that provided revenue. It was, however, reiterated that parking was not just for revenue generation.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Annual Parking Report be noted

35b **Parking Charges and Permits**

Part of the parking strategy was looking at further introduction of residents permits in certain areas and exploring the necessity to look at the introduction of tradesmen's permits.

RESOLVED:

THAT the parking permit issue for residents and tradesmen in certain areas be further investigated.

35c **One Hour Free Parking in Newport**

It was reported that the one hour free parking in Newport, subsidized by Newport Community Council was deemed as a success as it generated £62,500 in transactions. The need to be flexible was highlighted as beneficial and this local flexibility showed the art of the possible.

Once further data on resulting footfall became available, it was agreed that this merited further investigation to see if the project should be trailed in other towns on the Island.

RESOLVED:

THAT the reported one hour free parking be noted and that once further footfall data became available, the committee would revisit the topic to determine whether it should be trailed in other towns on the island.

36. **Committee's Work Plan**

The Committee's work plan and scoping documents were considered.

37. **Members' Question Time**

Cllr Ward asked about the timeline on the Peer Street Toilets in Newport, Sandown Town Hall, and Dinosaur Isle. He requested a written response.

CHAIRMAN