



Minutes

Name of meeting	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and Time	TUESDAY 6 JUNE 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs J Robertson (Chairman), D Adams, R Downer, W Drew, S Ellis, J Lever, K Love, R Quigley and C Quirk
Also Present	Cllrs I Stephens, D Andre, J Bacon and P Fuller Christopher Ashman, Sharon Betts, Debbie Downer, Laura Gaudion, Wendy Perera, Christopher Potter, Megan Tuckwell and Melanie White
Also Present (Virtual)	Cllrs J Jones-Evans, G Brodie, M Beston, C Jarman and A Garratt

1 Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)

Cllr David Adams was in attendance as a substitute for Cllr Peter Spink. It was advised that Cameron Palin (IWALC) had resigned from the committee and a nomination to fill the vacancy was being sought.

The chairman confirmed that he had been given notice of the Regulation 10 general exception notice regarding the marketing exercise for the former Yarmouth CE Primary School site.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Suzie Ellis declared an interest in Minute item 7, School Place Planning, as an associate school governor at Chillerton and Rookley Primary School and Godshill Primary School.

4 Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

A series of written questions had been submitted in relation to the report on School Place Planning, as follows; Oliver Tucker of Ryde (PQ 14/23), Rebecca Tucker of Ryde (PQ 15/23), Richard Cottell of Ryde (PQ 16/23), Jane Berry (PQ 17/23),

James Ranson of Ryde (PQ 18/23), Vicki Ranson of Ryde (PQ 19/23), Cathryn Grosvenor of Wootton (PQ 20/23), Lora Coombes of Ryde (PQ 21/23), Simon Coombes of Ryde (PQ 22/23), Michael Christopher of Ryde (PQ 23/23), Helen Smallwood of Ryde (PQ 24/23), Lizzie Christopher of Ryde (PQ 25/23), Roisin Mullins-Jacobs of Ryde (PQ 26/23), Jack Jacobs of Ryde (PQ 27/23), Sarah Cottell of Ryde (PQ 28/23), Vicki Humm (PQ 29/23) and Antonio Entrena Urquia (PQ 30/23). The chairman confirmed that a written response would be provided.

Sam Pickard asked an oral question in relation to the proposals to consult on the school closures and sought clarity around the process. The chairman advised that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills would be invited to address this matter at Minute item 7, School Place Planning.

5 Progress Update

The chairman presented the report which provided an overview of the progress against actions and outcomes from previous meetings. It was advised that work was underway to arrange an informal meeting in July 2023 between the committee, Southern Water, and the Environment Agency to discuss flood risk management. It was noted that the Cabinet had not yet responded to the formal request made by members of the committee in March 2023 to view the confidential Floating Bridge settlement. The Deputy Leader confirmed that a written response would be provided. The committee sought further clarity around the request of the committee in January 2023 that the Monitoring Officer determine a suitable solution to bring more awareness to the delegated decision and call-in processes.

RESOLVED:

THAT the progress report be noted.

6 Committee's Workplan:

6a Forward Plan

6b Committee's Work Programme 2022-25

The committee were invited to identify any items contained within the published forward plan that would benefit from early consideration within the committee's own workplan, or one of the policy and scrutiny committees. Consideration was given to the committee's work programme.

It was suggested that a task and finish group be established for councillors to scrutinise and aid in resolving the issues associated with the delivery of affordable housing. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Housing, Public Health, and Homelessness agreed to request that the Strategic Manager for Housing delivers a presentation to all councillors (to include details on affordable purchase, affordable rental, leasing, and mobile homes) in order for the scope of any potential task and finish group to be established.

RESOLVED:

THAT the forward plan and the Committee's work programme be noted.

7 School Place Planning

Consideration was given to the report which sought the Cabinet's approval to commence a public consultation on the closures of Cowes Primary School, St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, and Wroxall Primary School; and to publish a Public Notice to amalgamate Chillerton and Rookley Primary School with Godshill Primary School.

It was advised that since publication of the agenda, the report would no longer be presented to the Cabinet on 8 June 2023. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills was in attendance to provide clarification around the statutory processes and decision-making which led to the decision to withdraw the report. Questions were raised in relation to the release of the report, and it was recommended that the approach to future school place planning proposals should ensure that all affected staff and parents are notified prior to the release of formal reports into the public domain.

Questions were raised in relation to the long-term vision of the council in addressing the challenges which schools face as a result of low pupil forecast numbers and surplus school places. It was agreed that the matter would be considered by the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills with the relevant members of staff in attendance. It was recommended that future reporting on school place planning should include objective detail and narrative which clearly outlined the rationale for shortlisting the chosen schools, in addition to alternative options which had been explored and the reasons as to why those alternatives were not recommended.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report and update be considered and noted.

8 Partnership Arrangements

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Climate Change and Biosphere was in attendance to present the report which detailed the council's approach to partnership arrangements, in order for the committee to be assured that effective outcomes were being delivered. The committee sought clarification around the definition and nature of informal partnerships, and it was suggested that strategic partnerships should be distinguished as part of the remit of the Leader.

Questions were raised around whether the review had led to the re-evaluation of any of the partnerships. Comments were made regarding the requirements for entering into a partnership; particularly with regards the councils interpretation of each type of agreement and why they were deemed suitable for each partnership. The chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee was in attendance and welcomed any thoughts of the committee on partnership arrangements as it related to risk and value for money.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be considered and noted.

9 QPMR Q4 - 2022-23

Consideration was given to the report which provided a summary of progress against Corporate Plan activities for Quarter 4 of 2022-23 and detailed any issues which required attention (and the remedial action in place to deal with these).

Comments were made regarding the reduction of debt payments, borrowing, and capital expenditure. Questions were raised regarding the housing register, particularly in relation to the number of homeless individuals or those living in temporary accommodation. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Housing, Public Health and Homelessness confirmed that a detailed written response would be provided and circulated to the committee.

Questions were raised regarding planning and enforcement, particularly around the measures in place to address the staffing capacity issues and the potential revaluation of the fees and charges. The committee sought details on the ways in which the council could incentivise landowners build housing in a timely manner once planning permission had been granted. The Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal Protection and Flooding noted the national guidance and confirmed that this would be addressed in the revised Island Planning Strategy.

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of the committee receiving monthly finance reporting. The chairman confirmed that he would liaise with the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member to discuss the purpose, practicalities, and resourcing for this request.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be considered and noted.

10 Members' Question Time

Cllr Joe Robertson asked a question on behalf of IWALC, in relation to any formal partnership arrangements for town, parish and community councils. The Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal Protection and Flooding provided a verbal response.

Cllr Karl Love asked a question in relation to the financial settlement for the Floating Bridge, and whether the compensation would be used to replace the vessel. It was confirmed that a written response would be provided.

The chairman noted that a series of questions had been submitted to him regarding the School Place Planning report, and it was confirmed that those questions would be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Lifelong Skills for a response.

CHAIRMAN