



Minutes

Name of meeting	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date and Time	TUESDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs J Robertson (Chairman), P Spink (Vice-Chairman), R Downer, W Drew, S Ellis, J Lever, K Love, R Quigley and C Quirk
Co-opted	Simon Cooke (IWALC)
Also Present	Cllrs L Peacey-Wilcox, J Bacon, P Fuller, J Jones-Evans and P Jordan Sharon Betts, Laura Gaudion, Wendy Perera, Christopher Potter, Megan Tuckwell, Melanie White and Simon Wiggins
Also Present (Virtual)	Cllr M Oliver Dawn Lang

23 Apologies and Changes in Membership (If Any)

Cllr Vanessa Churchman was in attendance as a substitute for Cllr Suzie Ellis. Simon Cooke was welcomed to the committee as the newly appointed IWALC representative.

24 Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

25 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received at this stage.

26 Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

Mr Simon Richards submitted a written question in relation to the proposals for the future arrangements of Children's Services. A written response was provided (PQ37/23).

27 Progress Update

The chairman presented the report which provided an overview of the progress against actions and outcomes from previous meetings.

Reference was made to the request of the committee in January 2023 to receive a copy of the review of leisure centres once it had been completed. It was confirmed that the review was still underway.

Reference was made to the request of the committee in February 2023 to receive a copy of the signed heads of agreement in relation to the proposed disposal of Kingston Marine Park. It was confirmed that this would be circulated to the committee once complete.

The chairman advised that he had again discussed with the Leader the formal request made by members of the committee in March 2023 to view the confidential Floating Bridge settlement. It was advised that the request would be dealt with by the new Leader of the Council following the meeting of Full Council on 20 September 2023.

RESOLVED:

THAT the progress report and updates be noted.

28 Committee's Workplan:

28a Forward Plan

28b Committee's Work Programme 2022-25

Consideration was given to the committee's work programme and the committee were invited to identify any item 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.

Concerns were raised in relation to the senior organisational restructure of the council and the impact this could have on service delivery, with particular regards to regeneration. It was agreed that the impact of any reduced staffing capacity could be considered at a future meeting of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration by reviewing the Regeneration Strategy given the new context and climate.

Consideration was given to the scoping document for a future agenda item on the Maintenance and Restoration of Listed Buildings. It was agreed that the scope would be widened to include privately-owned listed buildings.

Comments were made in relation to the forward plan item on the Disposal of potential housing site(s) in East Cowes, due for consideration by the Cabinet in November 2023. It was requested that a report be provided outlining the reasons as to why the appendix (summarising responses which were submitted as commercial in confidence) would be restricted.

It was confirmed that the Housing Strategy 2020–2025 Action Plan Progress Report (due for consideration by the Cabinet in October 2023) would be considered by the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration.

Discussion took place regarding the approach to scrutinising the budget and the committee requested to see a copy of the draft savings programme when available.

The chairman confirmed that he had been given notice of the Regulation 10 general exception notice regarding the approval of the lease of the Parklands Centre to the Alzheimer Café.

RESOLVED:

- i) THAT the forward plan, and the committee's workplan, be noted.
- ii) THAT the scoping document for a future agenda item on the Maintenance and Restoration of Listed Buildings be agreed, with the scope widened to include privately-owned listed buildings.

29 Pre-Decision Scrutiny - Children's Services Future Arrangements

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the proposed arrangements for the termination of the Children's Services partnership with Hampshire County Council and the potential options for future service delivery, ahead of its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on 14 September 2023.

No comments were made in relation to the content of the report, and support was expressed for the proposed recommendation which sought to terminate the current partnership, returning the overall management of Children's Services functions to the Isle of Wight Council, with arrangements for 'buy-back' of specialist services where there was a cost-benefit. Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the report and its recommendation to Cabinet be supported.

30 Pre-Decision Scrutiny - Housing Affordability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The committee received the report which recommended the adoption of the Housing Affordability Supplementary Planning Document, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on 14 September 2023.

Comments were made regarding the funding needed to undertake housing needs surveys (to inform the housing mixes being sought at the local level), and the council's ability to enforce the document and negotiate with developers in order to offer deeper discounts from market value. Questions were raised in relation to the 'local connection' criteria; particularly around the potential for the exclusion of Island residents in seasonal employment, and any conflicts this criteria had against the local needs criteria for those in rural areas. Concerns were raised around the purpose of the document particularly regarding how it sought to make housing affordable to residents on-or-below the average Island wage.

Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

- i) THAT the Cabinet be asked to differentiate between transient and seasonal workers in the 'local connection' criteria, to ensure that long-term Island residents in seasonal employment are not disadvantaged.
- ii) THAT the report and its recommendations to Cabinet be supported, subject to the above considerations.

31 Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report Q1 2023-24

Consideration was given to the report which provided a summary of progress against Corporate Plan activities for Quarter 1 of 2023-24 and detailed any issues which required attention (and the remedial action in place to deal with these).

Discussion took place regarding daily ongoing financial management and the plans in place to address forecasted structural deficits and pressures. Comments were made regarding benefits payments and how the council compares to other authorities in issuing the correct entitlement.

Questions were raised regarding the delays to the Corporate Plan refresh, and it was confirmed that this would be considered by the new Leader of the Council following the meeting of Full Council on 20 September 2023. It was suggested that this be considered by the committee when available.

Discussion took place regarding the banding criteria on the housing register, and the Director of Adult Social Care Housing Needs confirmed that future reporting could show a breakdown of housing bandings in relation to homelessness, temporary accommodation, and emergency accommodation.

Comments were made in relation to the review which had been commissioned to look into the two remaining issues which impact the efficiency and operation of Floating Bridge 6, with a report setting out the findings and recommendations for the council's consideration and approval by December 2023. It was requested that the committee receive a copy of this report when available.

Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT a copy of the report setting out the findings and recommendations following the review of Floating Bridge 6 be presented to the committee when available.

32 Corporate Complaints Annual Report 2022-23

The committee received the annual report on corporate complaints and sought assurance that service improvements were being driven through lessons learnt.

Comments were made in relation to the high number of complaints made against Island Roads and the lack of detail on learning outcomes and a breakdown of complaints data. It was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Transport and

Infrastructure, Highways PFI and Transport Strategy would be contacted for a written response. It was requested that the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration be asked to look into more detail on the data from Island Roads on Fix My Street.

Discussion took place regarding the strengths-based approach adopted by Children's Services to resolve complaints with an emphasis on contacting complainants to seek a resolution via telephone or an in-person meeting, which had improved outcomes and reduced the escalation of complaints. It was recommended that this approach be adopted for corporate complaints where possible.

Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

- i) THAT Island Roads be asked to provide more data on complaints including a breakdown of categories and detail on learning outcomes.
- ii) THAT the adoption of face-to-face discussions with complainants to resolve corporate complaints (where possible), be recommended.

33 Members' Question Time

No written questions were received.

Cllr Vanessa Churchman asked an oral question in relation to the costs associated with mainland placements for children with specialist needs, and whether consideration could be given to creating an Island-based residential unit to mitigate some of those costs. It was agreed that this would be referred to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services, Education and Skills.

Cllr Peter Spink asked an oral question in relation to the Housing Affordability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), requesting that the Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal Protection and Flooding identifies (with reference to the report) what the SPD does to make affordable housing affordable to residents on-or-below the average Island wage. It was advised that a written response would be provided.

CHAIRMAN