



## Agenda Item Introduction

Committee	<b>ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION</b>
Date	<b>25 JULY 2024</b>
Topic	<b>LGA PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN</b>

---

### Background

1. The Council's Corporate Plan 2021-25 committed to holding a review of Planning Services. This was independently undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) in May 2022.
2. The Peer Review report made six recommendations and identified a wide range of actions and outcomes linked to those recommendations, totalling 57 individual interventions.
3. The committee wish to review the progress that took place in 2023-24 on the peer review action plan and to be informed of the priorities for 2024-25.

### Focus for Scrutiny

- What activities on the action plan were completed in 2023-24?
- What were the issues and challenges, were any activities not completed?
- What are the priorities for 2024-25 and beyond?
- Are these activities on track or are there any foreseen issues that need to be mitigated?
- Is there anything the committee can support with moving forward?

### Document(s) Attached

4. Appendix 1 - Peer Review Action Tracker 240424

Contact Point: Melanie White, Statutory Scrutiny Officer,  
(01983) 821000 ext 8876, e-mail [melanie.white@iow.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.white@iow.gov.uk)

# Scrutiny Report

## ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL

Meeting	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION</b>
Date	<b>25 JULY 2024</b>
Title	<b>UPDATE PAPER FOLLOWING THE PLANNING LGA PEER REVIEW REPORT AND PROGRESS UPDATE 2 MAY 2024</b>
Report of	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, COASTAL PROTECTION AND FLOODING</b>

## Background

1. This report provides a further update on progress since the last Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration meeting, which was held on 2 May 2024. Progress is also reported at the Corporate Management Team on a quarterly basis, with the most recent update being consider on 16 July 2024.
2. It was previously reported that 39 per cent of the 76 actions in the tracker have been completed and 53 per cent are in progress. This has moved forward, with 44 per cent of the actions being completed, with 50 per cent in progress. The current situation (as at 16 July 2024) is set out in the following table.

	<b>Not started</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>In Progress</b> *	<b>Change</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Change</b>
Core Principle	2	-1	18	-1	16	+2
Local Plan	0	-	4	-	2	+1
Pre-app Offer	1	-	5	-1	6	+1
DM Function	2	-	9	-	1	-
Enforcement Function	0	-	2	-	8	-
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>+4</b>

3. The previous report highlighted a number of headline actions have been undertaken in 23/24 Q4. Further to this, an update can now be given for 24/25 Q1.
  - A Full Council decision on 01/05/24 to proceed to the formal stages of the Island Planning Strategy.

- The Governance structure and associated reporting have been set up for:
    - The Planning Service Peer Review Project Board.
    - The Planning Service Peer Review Working Group.
  - Quarterly Planning Agents and Architects Forum was held on the 03/05/24.
  - Following requests at the PAAF, a professional's equivalent of the public Wednesday walk-in informal pre-app offer is being introduced. This professionals offer will provide bookable 30-minute slots and confirmation of this, along with an implementation timeframe has been sent to PAAF members (17/06/24).
  - Wednesday workshops held for all members of the Planning Committee have been held on 09/05/24 and 12/06/24.
  - Websites team have conducted a card sorting exercise with the planning team as the first step to restricting the planning section of the website. This will allow for a more streamlined and optimized planning services website experience. Work is underway to redefine this area of the website currently.
  - As part of the overarching work in respect of the Data Strategy. The Business Intelligence team have created a suite of reports, that will better enable the Planning Services team to identify barriers and pinch points in the Planning Service processes, which will allow for more targeted intervention in areas with specific problems.
  - Organisational Intelligence have developed a MS Forms Survey, which is due to being issued alongside decision notices for planning applications and pre-application advise responses from 01/07/24. The results are pulled through into Power BI for monitoring purposes.
  - The recruitment of the Planning Review Implementation Officer is in progress, with the closing date for applications being 01/07/24. Interviews are now diarised for the week commencing 22 July.
  - The Senior Lawyer post in the Planning and Regulatory team, funded by the PSDG, started on 10/06/24 and a meeting held on 20/06/24 to agree priorities and outcomes for the fixed term post.
  - The Planning Services team are connecting with IWALC to gauge interest in reviving the Planning Services Cluster meetings, or an alternative regular form of two-way engagement between parish, town and community councils and senior planning staff.
4. A further update in relation to the Island Planning Strategy (IPS), given the recommendations from the Peer Review, is that it has now been published for the regulation 19 period for representation. This started on Monday 8 July and closes at midnight on Monday 19 August. This is the start of the formal, more structured engagement regarding the IPS. Further information about this stage can be found online at [www.iow.gov.uk/IslandPlanningStrategy](http://www.iow.gov.uk/IslandPlanningStrategy).
  5. A key action was to reduce the 'backlog' of planning applications with the local planning authority. Following the introduction of a programme of review and action,

as at the end of 24/25 Q1 the 'backlog' of planning applications was **374**, a reduction from the start of the quarter (417 at w/e 29/03/24), from the start of the calendar year (475 at w/e 29/12/23) and from the highpoint of 594 undetermined planning applications in the week ending 17/03/23.

6. Further work has been undertaken on the project risk log, which is regularly reviewed and updated and currently identifies 11 risks. On initial assessment 3 risks were high, 7 medium and 2 low. Following mitigations being identified and implemented the risks currently stand at 3 medium and 8 low.

7. The three risks identified as medium (after mitigations) are identified as being:

Risk	Action plan not being delivered in a timely manner due to lack of resource capacity and resource being focussed on statutory BAU.		
Mitigation	Some additional capacity from elsewhere within the Council has been directed to support. A revised scheme of governance and reporting structures have been implemented. Peer Review Implementation Officer post has been established and advertised, to assist with delivery of key elements of the action plan.		
Situation	Probability Unlikely	Impact High	Proximity Short term

Risk	Councillors do not have sufficient understanding in the complexities of the planning system, which puts political choices and planning decisions at risk with resource and timing implications.		
Mitigation	New member training takes place following each election period and members of the planning committee will need to attend mandatory training before they can sit on the committee. Wednesday training workshops take place every 6 weeks to ensure that Councillors are refreshed on complex subject matters on a regular basis.		
Situation	Probability Unlikely	Impact High	Proximity Medium term

Risk	Lack of engagement from users of the service, resulting in a lack of buy-in to any changes and/or changes being imposed rather than collaborative working to identify issues and solutions.		
Mitigation	A MS forms survey will shortly be added to every planning decision notice email to enable users of the service to provide feedback on their experience of the process. There are plans to gain further feedback from other areas of the Planning service in due course.		
Situation	Probability Unlikely	Impact High	Proximity Medium term

8. There is currently no expected financial impact outside of existing budgets. As work progresses this may change but will be reported at the earliest opportunity through the governance structure.

**POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND  
REGENERATION**

Contact Point: Ollie Boulter, Strategic Manager for Planning & Infrastructure Delivery,  
☎ 821000 e-mail [oliver.boulter@iow.gov.uk](mailto:oliver.boulter@iow.gov.uk)

COLIN ROWLAND  
*Strategic Director for Community  
Services*

COUNCILLOR PAUL FULLER  
*Cabinet Member for Planning, Coastal  
Protection and Flooding*