



Minutes

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of meeting | POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION |
| Date and Time | THURSDAY 5 MAY 2022 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM |
| Venue | COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT |
| Present | Cllrs K Lucioni (Chairman), J Medland (Vice-Chairman), M Beston, J Lever, C Quirk and I Ward |
| Also Present (Non voting) | Cllrs S Hastings, J Jones-Evans, P Jordan, R Gillespie (Island Roads), A Mountifield (Solent LEP) |
| Officers Present | Oliver Boulter, Paul Thomas and Jayne Dando |
| Apologies | Cllrs A Garratt and P Fuller |

33. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2022 be approved.

34. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35. Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

No public questions were received.

36. Progress on outcomes and recommendations from previous meetings

Actions taken since the previous meeting were noted.

The Committee requested an update on the Digital Strategy as it related to the whole Island. The Committee also requested an update on electric vehicle charging points. The Cabinet Member for Highways PFI, Transport and Infrastructure explained that there had been a delay in installation following a change of provider. The programme of works would be circulated following the meeting.

The Bus Service Improvement Plan and Housing Strategy progress update would be moved to the October meeting.

RESOLVED:

Updates on both the digital strategy and the installation of electric vehicle charging points would be put onto the agenda to be considered at the next meeting in July.

37. Solent Local Enterprise Partnership

Anne-Marie Mountifield from the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership gave an overview of the freeport proposal for the Solent area. There had been 30 expressions of interest in becoming a freeport which had been shortlisted to eight in March 2021. The freeport status would encourage trade and investment, create jobs and provide import and export opportunities and improve economic prosperity. The island already had many innovative businesses, particularly in composite and marine manufacturing which would be built on. There would be certain tax reliefs and an ability to retain rates collected in each area for reinvestment. An explanation was given as to how the sites for development were chosen for the proposal.

Following questions from the Committee it was explained that the estimated new jobs figure of 16,000 quoted for the Solent area would rise due to new businesses coming along. The next stage was the delivery phase which would be on a more local level. The island was already a significant player in leading world class industries and some exceptionally unique natural assets which would place the island in a strong position.

In relation to governance, there would be a Board, membership of which was prescribed by government, with several committees under it from across the area, including an Investment Committee to decide on allocation of funds. The Board would have at least four independent directors. There were strict rules to be followed around declarations of interest. Although the IW would not have a representative on the Board, it would have a voice through the Committees and already had a seat on the SLEP board.

Initial feedback on the business case was expected in June, with a final decision by the end of August or beginning of September.

Freeport status would also bring an advantage to Southampton's bid for City of Culture status.

RESOLVED:

To note the benefits to the Island from the Solent Freeport status and its role within the Council's regeneration strategy.

38. Regeneration Projects

The list of current projects and milestones was considered, and updates were given. Levelling Up Round 2 was currently being worked on, with sites being identified and

bids being drawn up with priorities for transport schemes being encouraged. An Investment Plan was to be presented to the Cabinet in June. Funds for junction works for Nicholson Road were needed before the rest of the site could be unlocked for development. Branstone Farm had been the subject of a delay due to availability of materials, highways payments being negotiated and some other complications. The Committee would be updated in due course.

Heads of terms were to be agreed for Shanklin Spa site, before a consultation would be undertaken and planning permission applied for. The Cabinet member for Regeneration, Tourism and Business Development would confirm the latest position at the Members' Board the following week.

The Camp Hill project to improve the estate and release it for housing was progressing well, with improvement to lighting on council owned land. A review of the prison service was awaited in order to find out whether they would dispose of the land.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Tourism and Business Development had visited the Innovation Wight centre at Northwood, which was due to open in June/July 2022. Although there had been some supply chain issues it would provide a good co-working space.

RESOLVED:

Progress with achieving key milestones in the delivery of regeneration projects be noted.

39. Planning Services Review

A peer-review of the planning service was due to take place during the week commencing 16 May 2022, which would include the work of the Planning Committee. Concern was expressed that there was no experienced member of the planning committee from the Conservative group with experience who had been asked to take part in the review. Cllr Quirk's interest in taking part was noted.

Following receipt of the peer review report and its recommendations, it was intended to implement an action plan to set out how the Council would achieve the recommendations

RESOLVED:

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Community Engagement be advised that the Committee supported the view that besides the Leader of the Conservative Group, Cllr Joe Robertson, being invited to provide evidence, it would also be appropriate for a Conservative councillor who has experience of serving on the Planning Committee to also be involved in the review

The Policy and Scrutiny Committee request that the findings of the review and any supporting action plan be submitted to a future meeting

40. Local Transport Plan

The plan was being drawn up for the next 15 years. Hampshire County Council were assisting in a consultant capacity. The plan was on target. Stakeholder workshops were to be held in the summer of 2022 with a draft plan being presented to Cabinet at the end of the summer, followed by consultation in the autumn and a final draft completed by winter 2022, for a decision by Full Council in early 2023.

RESOLVED:

The main phases for the development of the Local Transport Plan 4 were noted and accepted as realistic and consideration of the draft be included within the Committee's workplan

41. Use of Glyphosate weedkiller on highways

Rob Gillespie from Island Roads explained that the use of weedkiller was contained in the Highways PFI contract. Other methods of removal had been trialled but had not met the standards set out in the contract. Manual removal had proved to be very time consuming and too costly and could make the weed problem worse. The use of quad bikes for carrying out spraying was explained. Other local authorities had been approached but the only ones not using the same method were inner-city authorities. Alternative methods including chemical-free alternatives would continue to be sought for the future. Records of the use of weedkiller and trials of alternatives were kept for 10 years and would be provided to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

The paper produced by Island Roads on a survey of the approach taken by other highway authorities, and the options available, be circulated to the Committee.

42. Committee's Work Plan

The Committee considered its future workplan and discussed a number of issues that it believed would be beneficial to include;

RESOLVED:

An item be included on the agenda for the 7 July 2022 meeting relating to the outcome of the bid by Southampton to be the City of Culture and how this will link in with the development of the Council's own Cultural and Heritage Strategies.

A report be sought on the programme of works to deliver the following elements of the Council's agreed budget :-

- a) £500,000 to restore and improve access paths to Island beaches, and to restore and improve footpaths, bridleways and rights of way;
- b) £500,000 for planting trees and restoring hedgerows on Council-owned land not suitable for housing.

43. **Members' Question Time**

Cllr Steve Hastings had submitted two written questions (MQ 11-22) regarding the opening date for the Energy Recovery Facility, and the number of subscribers to the Green Garden Waste Scheme and any effect from the recent rise in prices. A response was provided.

CHAIRMAN