



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND REGENERATION
Date and Time	THURSDAY 7 JULY 2022 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs J Medland (Vice-Chairman), R Downer, I Ward, W Drew and S Ellis
Officers Present	Christopher Ashman, Oliver Boulter, Alex Miss, Chris Potter and Paul Thistlewood
Apologies	Cllr J Lever

1. **Minutes**

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2022 be approved.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Medland declared an interest in item 5 relating to the electric vehicle charging points, as he had had some involvement in helping with this.

Cllr Medland also declared an interest in item 6 relating to the Planning peer review, as he was Chairman of the Planning Committee.

3. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

There were no public questions received.

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

The survey regarding the use of weedkiller on highways had just been received from Island Roads and would be circulated to the Committee.

5. **Progress with installation of charging points for electric vehicles (verbal update)**

The Committee were provided with the latest information on progress. Town, Parish and Community Councils had been consulted on the best places for machines to be sited in their areas. There was a cost of £10,000 for each machine to be installed. The council did not have the capacity to deliver the project directly itself and had therefore chosen the partnership route with a new provider. Charging costs were likely to change with the increase in energy prices. There had been some technical issues, however the Committee were assured that the target of summer 2022 would be met. Confirmation was given that the planning department would be sympathetic to residents who wished to install chargers on their own properties, and this had been included in the draft Island Planning Strategy. Liaison would take place with Island Roads to ensure the necessary infrastructure was in place. There had only been no planning issues to date, only one highways regulatory issue. There was to be a mix of charging machines with varying speeds.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be noted.

6. **Planning Services Review**

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement had welcomed the report and its recommendations. It was agreed that there was an urgent need to adopt the Island Plan. This would be discussed further by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee the following week. The Cabinet Member would be working with the Chairman of the Planning Committee and other councillors to create an action plan following the review, in order to restore faith and trust in the planning process. It would be important to set some concrete goals, and feedback from other councillors would be welcomed. Best practice by other local authorities would be researched to investigate different ways of working. It was suggested that funds were available for temporary assistance in the Planning Department once it was known how this could be used most effectively.

RESOLVED:

THAT the committee will monitor the delivery of the action plan.

7. **Traffic Regulation Order Policy**

The policy would set out a framework for decisions and sought to put the decision-making with the highways authority, balancing the need for new TROs against the needs of the local community and its amenities.

Town, Parish and Community Councils would be involved at the earlier stage and if there was a lot of opposition from them a TRO would not be brought forward.

RESOLVED:

THAT the policy be formally supported.

8. **Programme of Works (verbal update)**

A Rights of Way programme of works had been developed, with projects identified, including the upgrading of paths and bridges, to the value of £200,000. The Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment indicated that he would circulate the details to the Committee.

With regard to tree planting, there was an ongoing programme. The number of trees planted so far was 520, with another 134 planned. Some had been planted by the council, others by schools, Town, Parish and Community Councils, Green Gym, Planet Aware and some through the Queen's Green Canopy programme. An application had been made to the Forestry Commission for £150,000 to fund staff or an agency to identify land for future tree planting opportunities. The tree officer would be able to advise whether there were any trees available for community groups to plant.

RESOLVED:

The information was noted.

9. **Digital Strategy**

Since 2017 there had been investment of £3.8 million to date. There had been a lot of engagement with stakeholders and approximately 20 of them had been involved in the way forward. Wightfibre were continuing their installation rollout around the island.

In response to questions raised regarding digital accessibility, it was confirmed that issues would be addressed as they arose. The NHS had been engaged when formulating the strategy, as had Age UK and other older persons groups. The COVID pandemic had resulted in more services becoming digitalised and it would be important to try and ensure residents were not 'left behind' and were comfortable with using services.

There was some discussion on the move by Wightlink to the phasing out of cash payment for travel on its services. Whilst the Council had not ability to prevent this from occurring it did have the ability to try and influence its approach.

It was noted that many GP services had now gone online and that those who used the services most were probably those who struggled to go online. It was suggested that the council use its influence to encourage GPs to make their services as user-friendly as possible. Confirmation was given that this matter had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Health and Social Care, and that Healthwatch had done some work in this area. Health partners were aware of the work done by Age UK and were aware that there were still some people who would only engage face to face.

RESOLVED:

To note the progress with the Digital Island – Isle of Wight Digital Strategy.

That any further comments from Committee members on the potential priorities for the next phase of the strategy be sent to the Scrutiny Officer within the following week.

10. **Committee's Work Plan**

The contents of the workplan were noted. Any further suggestions would be welcomed.

11. **Members' Question Time**

There were no Members' questions

CHAIRMAN