



# Minutes

<b>Name of meeting</b>	<b><u>CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></b>
<b>Date and time</b>	<b>TUESDAY 7 JULY 2020, COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETING – ONLINE</b>
<b>Present</b>	Cllrs Andrew Garratt (Chairman), Debbie Andre, Vanessa Churchman, Richard Hollis, Michael Lilley, Michael Murwill, Chris Quirk, Brian Tyndall
<b>Co-opted (Voting)</b>	Gill Kennett (IWALC)
<b>Cabinet Members</b>	Cllrs Barry Abraham, Paul Brading, Steve Hastings, John Hobart, Stuart Hutchinson, Clare Mosdell, Gary Peace, Dave Stewart, Ian Ward, Wayne Whittle
<b>Also Present</b>	Cllr Geoff Brodie  Steve Apter, Chris Ashman, Simon Bryant, Steve Crocker, John Metcalfe, Wendy Perera, Claire Shand, Paul Thistlewood, Megan Tuckwell, Geoff Wild

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## 5. Minutes

### RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2020 be confirmed.

## 6. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received at this stage.

## 7. Fire Service Inspection Improvement Action Plan

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report which provided an overview of the closing position with regard to the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service (IWFRS) Action Plan resulting from the findings of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection report. All outstanding actions were completed, and work to continue with this progress would be ongoing.

Questions were raised regarding the involvement of unions, and members were reassured that dialogue with unions had intensified.

Discussion took place with regards to mental health, and whether the expertise around PTSD could be rolled out to other organisations in response to the pandemic. It was advised that a resilience programme designed to proactively build coping strategies

would be rolled out virtually across the organisation, which could be extended to other services, agencies, and the community.

Questions were raised regarding the socially distanced face-to-face meetings with fire stations and it was confirmed that this would be extended to retained firefighters also now that on station training had recommenced.

Members commended the report and expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by the Fire and Rescue Service during the pandemic.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) THAT the completion of all 25 actions and, thereby, 8 diagnostics within the IWFRS HMICFRS Action Plan be noted, and the closure of the action plan be approved.
- ii) THAT the extent of the work and improvements that have been undertaken to address the 'Cause for Concern' be acknowledged.

**8. COVID-19 Response and Recovery**

**(a) Response to Members' Questions**

The chairman presented his report which had been prepared to aid the Committee in developing its work in scrutinising the actions taken by the council when responding to the pandemic and implementing the recovery plans.

The chairman referred to a report published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies which highlighted issues for the Island, and an appendix which outlined a range of challenges for scrutiny when looking at Council actions and recovery plans.

Subsequent to the Committee's initial questioning, an additional series of questions were put to officers. These questions and their responses are attached as [Appendix 1](#) and form part of these minutes.

The Committee welcomed the approach being taken in responding to its questions and members confirmed that they remain committed to scrutinising this matter in a constructive way.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT the Committee welcomes the openness and transparency of Cabinet Members and officers in responding to its questions and it remains committed to scrutinising this matter in a constructive way which would help inform the workplan in the coming months.

**(b) Update on Current Issues and Recovery Plans**

The Leader referred to the report published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies, which found that the Isle of Wight was among the most vulnerable areas reflecting the elderly population, economic reliance on tourism and hospitality, and pockets of local socio-economic deprivation. This had been raised with the MP.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources provided an update on the financial position, including how Government support has been managed

through rates relief and grant funding. It was advised that additional funding for Local Authorities had been announced, however it was not yet known what the requirements would be to access this and how it could be used to support loss of income. Questions were raised and it was agreed that details of all payments and grants received from the Government to offset the costs in responding to Covid-19 would be circulated to the Committee.

The Chief Executive provided an overview of current activities relating to response and recovery. Libraries, registrars, and museums were beginning to reopen, and government guidance was anticipated with regard to the reopening of leisure centres. It was highlighted that there had been no outbreaks in care homes since the 24 May 2020 which was a credit to the efforts of staff within Adult Social Care, IW CCG, and the IW NHS Trust, and the Independent Care Sector.

The Assistant Chief Executive provided an update regarding communications activity. Collaboration with visitor-economy businesses was ongoing to ensure that visitors know what to do if they experience symptoms, and guidance had been provided to accommodations which was recognised nationally as an example of best practice. A Visitor Charter had been launched which set out the expectations for visitors, and it was agreed that a copy of this would be circulated to all members, together with Town, Parish and Community Councils.

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of a survey being rolled out to all members, to gain a grassroots understanding of the lessons learnt from the Council's response to dealing with the pandemic. The Leader agreed to consider this when the timing was appropriate.

A question was raised regarding the use by the Cowes Harbour Commissioners of the levy it made on those landing at its facilities and how this was utilised for the benefit of the locality. The Leader agreed to look into this.

#### RESOLVED:

- i) THAT details of payments/grants made by the Government to the Council to offset its costs in responding to Covid-19 would be circulated to the Committee.
- ii) THAT all members, together with Town, Parish and Community Councils, be provided of with details of the Visitors Charter.
- iii) THAT the Leader consider undertaking a survey of all members to gather a grassroots understanding of lessons learnt from the Council's response to dealing with the pandemic.
- iv) THAT the Leader look into the use by the Cowes Harbour Commissioners of the levy it makes on those landing at its facilities and report back to the Committee.

#### **(c) Isle of Wight Outbreak Control Plan**

The Director of Public Health presented the report which recommended the establishment of a Local Outbreak Engagement Board to provide political oversight of the local delivery of the Test and Trace Service, lead engagement with local communities, and to be the public face of the council's response in the

event of a local outbreak. The report also recommended the establishment of a Health Protection Board to manage the pandemic locally and delegates to the Director of Public Health authority to allocate the funding provided.

The chairman noted that, to comply with the need for a Plan for the Isle of Wight, this item appeared on the Forward Plan with less than 28-days' notice before a decision was due to be made. The chairman confirmed that he was consulted and approved the paper going on the Forward Plan immediately.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT the Committee finds the Outbreak Control Plan fit for purpose and recommends that the Cabinet proceed with its implementation, subject to its own deliberations.

At the conclusion of the discussion members adjourned for a 10-minute comfort break.

**9. Comments on other items to be considered by the Cabinet on 9 July 2020**

• **East Cowes Waterfront Site Acquisition**

The Leader presented the report which outlined the considerations that the council must have with regard to acquiring the land and buildings on East Cowes waterfront (formerly known as Venture Quays).

Members expressed support for the proposals, particularly with regard to the opportunities to safeguard local marine-sector jobs, enable wider regeneration of the East Cowes town centre, and provide a viable local affordable housing scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT the Committee finds a strong case for the Cabinet to move forward with its proposed decision relating to this site.

**10. Corporate Scrutiny Committee's Workplan 2020/21**

**(a) Forward Plan**

Consideration was given to the items contained within the published forward plan that would benefit from early consideration within the Committee's workplan. Discussion took place and a concern was raised regarding the proposed delegated decision on the Loan Investment in Perpetuus Tidal Energy Centre (PTEC).

The chairman noted that the New Combined Fire Authority Precept appeared on the Forward Plan with less than 28-days' notice before the decision was due to be made at Full Council on 15 July 2020. It was confirmed that he had been consulted and was satisfied with the reasons for urgency.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT the items contained within the published Forward Plan be noted.

**(b) Workplan**

Discussion took place regarding the workplan. Members advised that it would be refreshed and indicated that priority would be given to consideration of areas including; the cost of Covid-19 response and recovery, the Highway PFI contract and programme of works, the communication and consultation strategies, the commercialisation strategy, and partnership working.

It was agreed that the scope for these areas would be the subject of further informal discussions between members, and the Chief Executive requested that identification of the overarching question being asked would help officers formulate comprehensive and constructive responses.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT the workplan be refreshed subject to further informal discussions between Committee members.

CHAIRMAN