

It has been a month of meetings. I've been carrying on discussions with Southern Water, IoWC Highways and Island Roads. The good news is that it all seems to be moving in a positive direction with real constructive discussions taking place.

Southern Water CEO, Lawrence Gosden has sent the following 'commitments' relating to Bembridge:

Reducing storm overflow discharges	Ongoing flooding risk to customers in Bembridge requiring immediate mitigation.	Provide a temporary solution to alleviate flooding in Bembridge Point.	September 2026
Reducing storm overflow discharges	Permanent solution in Bembridge must be identified which doesn't include the repair of the CSO.	Provide a long-term solution to alleviate flooding at Bembridge Point.	July 2027
Reducing storm overflow discharges	Strong local concern in Bembridge requires direct engagement and reassurance.	Hold a public meeting in the Bembridge area.	October 2026

IoWC Highways have admitted that there is a problem with policy regarding abandoned vehicles. There are too many gaps where responsibility falls between Island Roads, the DVLA and the police. Highways have assured me that they are looking into amending policy and this will be brought to Council soon. I'll have to keep chasing this one.

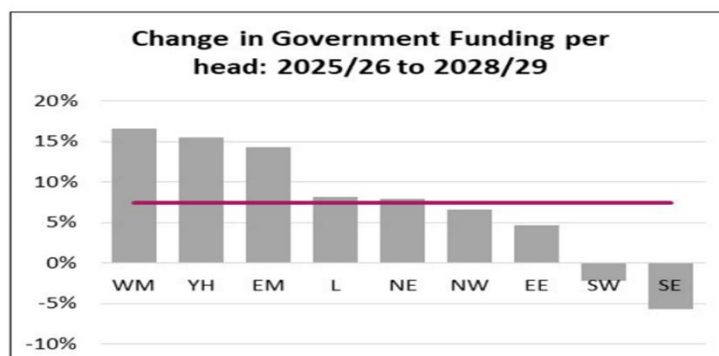
Island roads have also committed to a short-term fix of potholes on the High Street and Mill Road, with a more thorough investigation taking place in the Autumn. I am pushing for any works to the High Street associated with the development of 130 homes to be co-ordinated with any resurfacing works to reduce disruption.

Regarding the 130 homes the last correspondence I had with Captiva indicated that they now planned to begin works in August.

Focusing on IoWC meetings the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee meeting was held on the 9th July. We were given an update on the council finances, which should have come as no surprise to anyone, but was sobering, nonetheless.

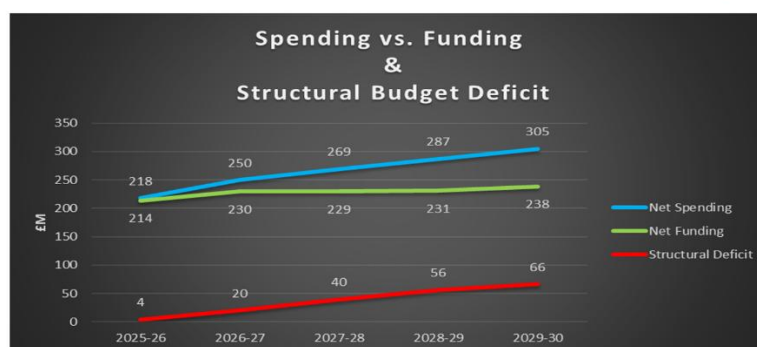
One of the biggest problems we have, alongside ever-increasing costs in adult social care, is the terrible deal that the Island and the Southeast of England were handed via the government's 'Fair Funding Formula'.

Fair Funding Formula: National Impact



This is contributing to a potential structural deficit of £66m by 2029 - 30.

Structural Deficits



It is clear that there are going to be very hard decisions ahead. The whole council will need to come together to identify the most sensible and fair way of getting us back on track.

Finally on 15th July the Full meeting of the IoWC was held. The main talking point from the meeting was the vote on the petition surrounding a declaration of no confidence in Southern Water. I felt that this petition adequately reflected the public anger at the current situation, whilst keeping the door open for Southern Water to take actions (as per the above commitments) that could possibly restore confidence. I therefore voted in favour of the petition. Sadly, all but one of the Reform Councillors voted against, with the Leader and Chair of the Council, along with 4 of the Island First Network group abstaining. There were therefore 15 For, 17 Against and 6 Abstentions. The petition therefore failed.

A later motion on Southern Water which covered similar demands, put forward by the leader Cllr J Bacon, and Reform Cllr L Kirkby did pass, however it did not meet the petitions request of expressing 'no confidence'.