

Cancer patients' travel saved in rethink

CONTROVERSIAL proposals to axe travel grants for cancer patients visiting mainland hospitals for treatment have been dropped.

The plans, contained in IW Council budget papers, would have seen the £60,000 set aside to pay for cross-Solent travel cut as finance chiefs struggle to balance the books.

However, the authority's deputy

leader and cabinet member for social care, Cllr Steve Stubbings, confirmed on Tuesday the proposal had been dropped.

He said: "We had a meeting this morning where the executive firmed up the proposals they would put to the council with recommendations and this proposal was not one of them."

The controversial idea had sparked a storm of protest from cancer

patients, who raised fears many could not afford the cost of repeated trips to Southampton and Portsmouth for vital radiotherapy treatment.

Fears were raised the proposals could be a 'death sentence' for some patients who could not afford the costs.

Dave Kiely, chairman of the IW Prostate Cancer Support Group, welcomed the decision.

He said: "I am amazed they actually

had the proposal on the cards. I just could not believe it."

Another prostate cancer patient, Vincent Whelan, 74, from Bembridge, added: "You have all the stress of getting there on time and then they came up with this unbelievable proposal."

● A public meeting is being held at the Riverside Centre, Newport, tomorrow (Saturday) at 12.30pm to discuss how travel arrangements can be safeguarded for future years.