



BEACH CLEANING & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 66/14

11 AUGUST 2014

The purpose of this report is to record the outcomes of the recent meetings arranged by the Isle of Wight Council at the request of the Country Training Partnership for Clerks to meet with the relevant senior Officers to discuss the issues arising from the decision to cease funding these services from 31 March 2014.

No. DETAIL

1) CONTEXT

- a) The Beach Cleaning Meeting took place on 15 July at County Hall and the one for Grounds Maintenance followed on 23 July at Riverside. I attended both.
 - b) The current Beach Cleaning Contract, with Brighstone Landscaping, costs the Isle of Wight Council a total of £157,000 a year and expires at 31 March 2015.
 - c) The current Grounds Maintenance Contract costs the Isle of Wight Council a total of £700,000 a year and expires at 31 March 2015.
 - d) It was stressed at both meetings that the Contracts were never written to enable them to be broken down into Parish level costs and that, consequently, the circulated costings to individual Town and Parish Councils are the best estimates of current staff rather than actual costs.
 - e) It was also reported at each meeting that each contract can be extended for a further 12 months.
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2) BEACH CLEANING

- a) The Isle of Wight Council's Head of Recreation & Public Spaces Service Alex Minns opened the meeting by identifying four possible options from 1 April 2015:
 - o Town and Parish Councils buy into a contract for the whole island at a total cost of £160,000.
 - o Let the contract but at a reduced schedule of work.
 - o Do nothing – this would mean no beach cleaning would take place at all with the resultant impact on tourism, beach awards etc.
 - o Town and Parish Councils make individual arrangements.
 - b) There was a clear understanding on all sides that the beaches are used by residents of Parishes without a beach in their own area as well as being a critical element of the Island's Tourist offer and, consequently, there is a case for the cleaning costs being met not solely by those Town and Parish councils with beaches.
 - c) It was therefore generally agreed by the meeting that the basis of an acceptance by Town and Parish Councils of carrying the future cleaning costs should be contributions from all with a higher weighting for those with beaches in their area.
 - d) Alex Minns made clear the urgency of the situation given that for a new Contract to be negotiated work on the detail would have to start no later than the beginning of October with the Town and Parish contributions agreed by the end of September.
 - e) Gill Kennett, Chair of the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) undertook to explore the possibility of all Town and Parish Councils, including those not currently members of IWALC, buying in to an Isle of Wight Council run contract.
 - f) Alex Minns concluded the meeting by saying that he would write to all Councils with the options available and with a formula by which they could pay for a new Beach Cleaning contract.
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3) GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- a) The options outlined at the start of this meeting by the Isle of Wight Council's Head of Recreation & Public Spaces Service Alex Minns were the same as those for the Beach Cleaning one above.
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- b) The meeting was informed that maintaining the Island's 400 hectares of parks, greens, plants and grassed areas currently costs £700k a year.
 - c) Of that total £200k is for cemeteries and that work the Isle of Wight Council will continue.
 - d) Of the remaining £500k, Principal Parks – of which Ventnor has two: Ventnor Park and the Cascades – account for £350k. The Isle of Wight Council is still discussing whether or not to continue funding them, leaving Town & Parish Councils to decide how to deal with the rest.
 - g) As with Beaches, it was recognised that Principal Parks are used by residents of Parishes without one in their own area as well as being a critical element of the Island's Tourist offer and, consequently, there is a case for the maintenance costs not being met solely by those Town and Parish Councils with them.
 - e) It was also made clear from all Town and Parish Council representatives that the costs of maintaining the Principal Parks - £48,747 for Ventnor's two – could not be met from their budgets, especially since it had been made clear that the Isle of Wight Council would retain all the income currently received from services provided in those parks.
 - f) In this area too, Alex Minns will write to all Town and Parish Councils by the end of August in time for them to clarify their proposals by the end of September.
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