



BEACH CLEANING SERVICES

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 55/14

14 JULY 2014

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the latest information from the Isle of Wight Council on the current extent and costs of their Beach Cleaning services in Ventnor as the basis for responding to their planned closure at 31 March 2015.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) As Members are aware, the Isle of Wight Council's need to achieve a Budget reduction of £28M by the financial year 2016/7 has prompted a decision to withdraw funding from a range of their current discretionary services, of which Beach Cleaning is one.
- b) Councillor Steve Stubbings, the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk met with Head of Service Alex Minns, Commercial Manager Sean Newton and Recreation & Public Spaces Manager Lee Matthews at Enterprise House on Thursday 20 February for an initial discussion of the consequences for the town of that decision, as reported to the Town Council meeting of 10 March 2014.
- c) It is now clear that the provision of the Beach Cleaning services will cease on 31 March 2015 and the Town Council needs to take a view on how it will respond to that reality.
- d) The issues were discussed at a meeting arranged by the County Training Partnership on 23 May for Clerks and Councillors that I attended along with County Councillor Steve Stubbings following which a meeting focusing on Beach Cleaning has now been arranged by the Partnership for 15 July at County Hall and I have booked in to attend that.

2) SERVICES AND COSTS

- a) The list of the beaches currently serviced by the existing arrangements the Isle of Wight Council has in place for Beach Cleaning services in Ventnor is attached to this report.
- b) The total current annual cost to the Isle of Wight Council is £23,419, made up as shown in the following table:

Beach	Amount
Bonchurch	£4,683
Ventnor	\$9,367
Orchard Bay	£4,683
SteePhill Cove	£4,683
Total	£23,417

- c) The details for each are shown on the attached listing.

3) FURTHER INFORMATION

- a) Although discussion by Members may be useful at this time, it seem likely that further information will be required before any decisions can be made, not least because it is understood that the Isle of Wight Council does not yet have a contract in place for next year.
- b) Some of that should be available from the 15 July focus group meeting with the Isle of Wight Council.

4) DEVOLUTION?

- a) Although these discussions take place within a context usually described as 'devolution of services' this obscures the fact that the essential element of devolution – local control – is likely to be absent from the arrangements currently under discussion.

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- b) While this Report isn't recommending a Boston Tea Party style rebellion, their message of 'no taxation without representation' is one both the Town Council and the town's residents might want to discuss before agreeing to simply take on the costs of service provision by signing up to pay a share of existing contracts without any further influence on delivery.
 - c) The Clerks of larger town and parish councils present at the meeting in London I attended on Friday 11 July that already run genuinely devolved services were very clear indeed that the value of the change was the ability to decide when action to solve problems reported to them could be taken rather than simply passing on the concerns or complaints to the principal authority as had been the case prior to devolution.
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