



The purpose of this Report is to provide an update on developments in connection with the future of the Coastal Centre since the October meeting.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The meeting of the Town Council on 8 October discussed the Isle of Wight Council's decision not to permit the project developed by the Town Council to proceed on the grounds of their intention to sell the building on the open market.
 - b) The concluding unanimous resolution, recorded in minute 138/12, determined two consequent actions:
 - i) concerns about this matter be addressed formally to the Chief Executive of the Isle of Wight Council with a clear statement of the need for much closer contact with and respect for Town & Parish Councils in the disposal of local assets; and
 - ii) the Communities Secretary Eric Pickles be asked in writing for his advice on how the actions of the Isle of Wight Council in this matter comply with the spirit and legal provisions of the Localism Act, with a copy to the Isle of Wight Council and Member of Parliament.
-

2) MEETING WITH THE ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL

- a) The Mayor and Town Clerk received an invitation to meet with the Isle of Wight Council Leader David Pugh, Chief Executive Steve Beynon and Deputy Director Economy, Tourism and Leisure John Metcalfe on Monday 5 November 2012.
 - b) The basis of the invitation was to provide an opportunity to discuss other buildings in Ventnor and the possibility of incorporating some elements of the Town Council's proposed project in one of them.
 - c) The Council Leader David Pugh sent his apologies for absence from the meeting. Although other buildings in the town were discussed during the one hour meeting, attention focused on the potential development of St Francis School's Upper Site as a community hub with the potential to house Library, the Youth Centre and the Town Council and its projects.
 - d) The Mayor and Town Clerk said that both the size and location of the school site made it unattractive for the proposed function and in any case too small to accommodate the range of provision being explored.
 - e) The Town Council's strong sense that the Coastal Centre belonged to the town and was the only building with both the location and size to accommodate the services under discussion was likely to result in every effort to retain it for public service and economic regeneration.
-

3) LETTER TO THE COMMUNITIES SECRETARY

- a) Although the text of the letter to the Communities Secretary Eric Pickles was agreed between the Town Clerk, Mayor and Deputy Mayor soon after the October meeting, it was agreed to postpone its sending until after the meeting summarised above.
 - b) Given that the meeting had not been able to affect the Isle of Wight Council's political decision about the building – and the project's future – the letter was sent on 7 October with copies to Island MP Andrew Turner, and the Isle of Wight Council's Chief Executive and Leader.
 - c) The Leader has acknowledged receipt of the letter in an email dated 9 October that states:
-

I acknowledge receipt of your letter.

I disagree with your assertion that we have failed to comply with the intentions of the Localism Act.

I see little point seeking to rebut the various other assertions in your letter, as these points have already been substantially responded to in your correspondence with officers.

The Isle of Wight Council's position on the building remains as stated.

Kind regards.

David

4) OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Letters of support for the Town Council's project for the Coastal Centre have been sent to the Isle of Wight Council by both the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWLAC) and Ventnor Business Association.

5) NEXT STEPS

- a) The Isle of Wight Council agreed its policy for the Implementation of the Community Right to Bid that became law on 21 September at the Cabinet meeting of Tuesday 30 October.
 - b) The Town Council is recommended to consider the nomination of the Coastal Centre as an Asset of Community Value under the Community Right to Bid and other options available to it in private session under item 17 of the Agenda for this meeting.
-