



# PUBLIC TOILETS

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 96/15

9 NOVEMBER 2015

The purpose of this paper is to provide a basis for the Town Council's decision as to how it wants to the Isle of Wight Council's invitation to Town and Parish Councils to enter Expressions of Interest to take over the management and/or ownership of the town's Public Toilets

## No. DETAIL

### 1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Isle of Wight Council's (IoWC) consultation on the potential for a Community Toilet scheme to allow the closure of as many as possible of the remaining 41 Public Toilets on the Island showed the scheme to be unworkable.
- b) The IoWC's Budget for 2015/16 includes an amount of £237,489 for its Public Toilets but that is after allowing for a projected saving through the Community Toilet Scheme of £150,000 that will now not be available.
- c) The Community Toilet Scheme was also projected to deliver savings of £300,000 in 2016/17 and each succeeding year.
- d) The eight Public Toilets that have already been leased to Town and Parish Councils under the 2011/12 closure programme produced an average annual saving of £18,603.
- e) Consequently, the Executive Meeting of 27 October 2015 resolved to invite Expressions of Interest from Town and Parish Councils to take over the management or ownership of the Public Toilets in their area.

### 2) VENTNOR TOILETS

- a) The town currently has four Public Toilets one of which, Shore Road in Bonchurch, is already leased to the Town Council until 28 February 2037 under a 25 year lease that commenced in 2012 on a peppercorn rent basis.
- b) The one in the Park is normally only open from the Monday before Good Friday to 30 September each year.
- c) The Marlborough Road and Eastern Esplanade toilets are open all year round during daylight hours with the both being cleaned once a day during winter with the former being cleaned twice daily in summer and the latter three times.

### 3) COSTS

- a) The IoWC provided its operational costs for the Marlborough Road, Eastern Esplanade and Ventnor Park toilets for the financial year 2013/14 as follows:

Toilet	Annual Cost
Eastern Esplanade	£20,796
Marlborough Road	£11,853
Ventnor Park	£4,027
Total	£36,676

- b) The costs include a total of £11,448 for cleaning and it is likely that some savings could be achieved through a Town Council operated arrangement that would include the benefit of the commitment of the Putting Green operator to be responsible for both cleaning and redecoration of the Ventnor Park toilet.
- c) The high cost of the Eastern Esplanade toilet includes the amount of £6,237 for Business Rates (cf £1,617 for Marlborough Road) and there is a case for claiming exemption from this cost in the context of the IoWC's note that *where a toilet facility is located within or adjacent to a green space or park an exemption is made for the payment of rates.*

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- d) If the application for exemption from rates on the Eastern Esplanade toilet is successful and allowing the likely savings on cleaning, given that this year's Town Council Budget included a provision of £16,000 for the potential of half year costs, the additional requirement from the 2016/17 Precept would be of the order of £10,000.
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**4) RECOMMENDATION**

- a) The Public Buildings Working Group have considered to matter in detail at its recent meetings and recommends the Town Council to submit an Expression of Interest in taking on the freehold and responsibility for all operation costs of the remaining four Public Toilets.
- b) Consequently, the Town Council is recommended to:
- i) agree in principal to enter an Expression of Interest in taking on responsibility for the four toilets;
  - ii) authorise the Town Clerk to continue discussions with Isle of Wight Council Officers about the terms of any agreed transfer of ownership and management of the four toilets;
  - iii) ask the Public Buildings Working Group to agree proposals and costs for the cleaning of the four toilets following any such transfer; and
  - iv) receive a further report on the matter at its meeting of 14 December.
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