



The purpose of this paper is to ask Members to agree the terms for the new status of Partnership Library from 1 April 2016.

**No. DETAIL**

---

**1) BACKGROUND**

- a) The Town Council considered the consequences of the Isle of Wight Council's Executive decision to change the status of the town's Library, along with the Libraries of both Cowes and Freshwater, to that of a Partnership Library at its meeting of 9 November.
  - b) Minute 143/15 of that meeting authorised the Town Clerk, advised by the Public Buildings Working Group, to discuss and develop the detailed negotiations with Isle of Wight Council Officers and report back to this meeting of the Town Council.
  - c) The Town Clerk met, at the Library, with the Isle of Wight Council Officers Alex Minns, Lee Matthews and Rob Jones on Wednesday 11 November.
  - d) The Public Buildings Working Group discussed the outcome from that session at its meeting of 16 November and discussed an email from Lee Matthews of 30 November setting out his understanding of the proposals at its meeting the following day, 1 December.
  - e) The Public Buildings Working Group recommends the Town Council to agree the proposals in the following sections of this Report which the Isle of Wight Council Officers have confirmed they will also support.
  - f) The Town Council has been asked to respond to the proposals by 20 December.
- 

**2) RUNNING COSTS**

- a) The annual running costs that the Town Council will become responsible for are as set out in the following table:

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
Cleaning	3,103
Gas	1,493
Electricity	832
Premises Insurance	662
'Security	290
Water	104
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,484</b>

- b) There are two important elements that are not included and will not be expected costs for the Town Council.
  - c) The first of these is Maintenance, in respect of which the email from Lee Matthews states:  
*Please be aware that IWC does not intend to charge for building maintenance on the current library building but this would of course change should a new facility be built as the freehold would be yours.*
  - d) All of the three Town Councils affected by the change have been clear in their view that they would not take on responsibility for maintenance unless the buildings are first restored to a fully fit for purpose condition.
  - e) The Isle of Wight Council has supplied a copy of the Condition Survey carried out for Ventnor Library that has recorded the extensive damp, and asbestos along with lack of required repairs and decoration from which it is clear that substantial financial investment would be required for it to be retained in the medium to long term, for which neither Council has the funds
-

---

available.

- f) In any event, as both Councils also agree that relocation to a more central position with easier access would assist the Library to play its full and necessary role in the town's future, there would not be a good business case for such investment.
  - g) The other 'missing' element from the proposed costs to the Town Council is that of the Business Rates for the building of £5,534.
  - h) This is being offered by the Isle of Wight Council as an offset against the cost to the Town Council of the employment of a second member of staff for the Library as set out in the next section of this Report.
- 

### 3) STAFFING

- a) The Isle of Wight Council's staffing contribution to the three Partnership Libraries will consist of only one member of staff for each.
  - b) The Town Council has consistently taken the view that this level is inadequate to provide for the Library service it wants to see across the 24 opening hours and included the issue in its community consultation event in January this year that gave strong support for funding a second member of staff from the Precept.
  - c) The Isle of Wight Council have told us that the cost of employing a second member of staff on a 22-hour week basis, including on-costs, would be £14,125 a year.
- 

### 4) PARTNERSHIP

- a) The Isle of Wight Council's Officers are proposing a formal Partnership framework for the operation of the Library reflecting both Councils' commitments to its future.
  - b) It is anticipated that the Isle of Wight Council's Executive Meeting of 26 January will agree the proposals following which the details of the Partnership framework will be developed and agreed in time to be in place for the change to take place by 1 April 2016.
- 

### 5) PHASE TWO

- a) Lee Matthews' email makes clear the Isle of Wight Council's agreement that the continuation of the Partnership Library in the present premises is a holding position until relocation is possible; it states:  
*The second phase will explore options on how the IWC may assist the gift of the freehold of the Ventnor Central site to your council, in order that you may redevelop the building to include a library. This support would help widen community services on the site and enable income generation on a long term basis to make the building sustainable for the town.*
  - b) The potential of the freehold transfer of the Ventnor Central site opens up a range of possibilities for sustainable funding of the Library in the long term, some of which are already under discussion by the Public Buildings Working Group.
  - c) It is proposed that those possibilities continue to be explored by the Group and within the ongoing discussions with the Isle of Wight Council about the further devolution of assets.
- 

### 6) RECOMMENDATION

The Town Council is recommended to:

- i) confirm its commitment to full participation in a Partnership basis for the operation of Ventnor Library from 1 April 2016;
  - ii) agree to meet the running costs of the Library with the exception of maintenance and Business Rates and to fund an additional 22 hours of staff time;
  - iii) authorise the Town Clerk, advised by the Public Buildings Working Group, to continue discussions with the Isle of Wight Council in respect of both the detail of the Partnership agreement and the future location of the Library.
-