



VENTNOR LIBRARY CONSULTATION

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 63/15

13 JULY 2015

The purpose of this paper is to begin a discussion by Members the Town Council's response to the consultation on the Island's Libraries opened by the Isle of Wight Council (IoWC) on Monday 6 July with a closing date of 6 September.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The IoWC's current Library Service is made up of:
 - 6 Public Libraries: Newport, Ryde, Cowes, Freshwater, Sandown and Ventnor
 - A mobile Library delivered through two vehicles.
 - 5 Community Libraries: Bembridge, Brighthstone, East Cowes, Niton and Shanklin.
- b) The IoWC's Budget Strategy proposals accepted by the Full Council Meeting of 25 February 2015 included budget savings on the current Library Service provision of £90k in 2015/16 and £180k in each of the next two years on the basis of:

A proposal which will seek to work in partnership with local councils to take on the running costs of three existing library sites in exchange for the buildings being made available as community supported venues 24/7. Full year effect of savings could be achieved from April 2016 and it is assumed that changes could begin to be implemented by October 2015.
- c) It is that proposal that is the basis of the consultation with the three Libraries to be moved into the new *Community-supported* category identified as Cowes, Freshwater and Ventnor.

2) A COMMUNITY SUPPORTED LIBRARY

- a) *The IoWC's contribution:*
A member of Staff, Book stock, Library management system, Online services, Public computers, Internet connection, Volunteer training.
- b) *The Town Council's contribution:*
Business rates, Utilities, Cleaning, Maintenance.
- c) *Other changes:*
The change to Ventnor's Library would consist of a reduction to one Librarian from the current two with weekly opening hours reduced from 24 to 21.

3) CONSULTATION

- a) The consultation paper states that there are four elements to the proposed revised service that the consultation is about:
 - a new library model which retains the six public libraries with up to three of these being supported by the community
 - potential changes to the mobile library service
 - increasing the use of volunteers
 - a possible small reduction of opening hours in the three community supported libraries
- b) Although one question does offer a yes/no choice to the reduction in opening hours, that choice is not available anywhere in the 8 pages of the questionnaire about the change to a community supported library.
- c) The IoWC's information on which the consultation is based can be reached by clicking [this link](#).
- d) The form on which responses are to be made can be reached by clicking [this link](#).
- e) The questionnaire can be downloaded and completed by hand and paper copies are available.

4) TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE

- a) The basis for responses is as individual residents not as a corporate body; consequently one of

-
- the questions for the Town Council is whether or not it wishes to submit a corporate response.
- b) In any event, it is important to keep any response that is to be submitted completely separate from the ongoing negotiations about the possible relocation of Ventnor's Library and the legal basis for local management of it by the Town Council.
 - c) The central issue of this consultation is that of whether or not the change to a Community Supported Library, rather than remaining part of the main public library service as is the case with Sandown is one the Town Council would support in any response it elects to make.
 - d) It is also important to bear in mind that any decision, and agreement on the content of a corporate response if there is to be one, do not have to be concluded at this meeting given that the consultation is open until 6 September.
-

5) RECOMMENDATION

The Town Council is recommended to ask the Town Clerk to prepare a case for Ventnor Library remaining one of the Island's Main Public Libraries along with Newport, Ryde and Sandown on the basis of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of the Town by the Public Health Service for consideration at the Town Council Meeting of 10 August 2015.
