



RYDE TOWN COUNCIL

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES WORKING PARTY HELD ON MONDAY 23 JULY 2018 IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, LIND STREET, RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT COMMENCING AT 5:00PM.

- Present:
- Ryde Town Councillors
Christine Hall, Sue Lyons, Jim Moody,
Malcolm Ross, Tim Wakeley (Chairman)
- Isle of Wight Councillor Dave Stewart
(Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Partnership),
Isle of Wight Councillor Stuart Hutchinson
(Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources),
Isle of Wight Councillor John Hobart
(Cabinet Member for Environment and Heritage).
Isle of Wight Council Officers:
Alex Minns (Head of Commercial Services),
Lee Matthews (Recreation and Public Services Manager).
- In Attendance :
- Ady White, Ryde Town Council (Clerk and notes)
- Chris Turvey, Ryde Town Council (Planning Clerk)

30/18 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies had been received from Ryde Town Councillor Diana Conyers.

31/18 **NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 17 July 2018 were received and agreed.

32/18 **VISION FOR RYDE/NEXT STEPS**

Councillor Tim Wakeley introduced the Vision Paper for Ryde. He reported that this was the next step for Ryde Town Council's development covering key areas where Ryde residents over a period of

time, have highlighted areas of an importance and where it would be useful to open a dialogue with the Isle of Wight Council about services and facilities that Ryde may wish to consider taking on in the future.

Isle of Wight Councillor Dave Stewart reported that the Isle of Wight Council financial position was not quite as dire as initially thought. The five areas in the Corporate Plan were:

- Commercialisation
- Digitilisation
- Housing
- One Public Service (Islandwide)
- Sustainability

The newly appointed assistant chief executive is tasked with looking at all of these areas.

Isle of Wight Councillor Stuart Hutchinson reported that the first budget set by this administration was done at speed due to time constraints but were happy that the budget had come in 3% under target – which equates to approx. £5m. In addition, the ‘Gold Plated’ Island Roads contract is under review and savings are expected to be made here.

The introduction of the new garden waste service had been a hugely popular for Island residents and is bringing in additional revenue.

He reported that officers had looked at the payment of VAT and it is hoped that a further £0.5m may be saved here.

This had all helped to build some resilience into the budget. It is hoped the forthcoming budget be set without significant staff or service reduction. The IWC were hopeful to gain Government recognition with funding but were unable to comment on how much of the £6.5m funding would be received.

IW Cllr Stuart Hutchinson also reported that the IWC had now used the 6% allocation they were able to raise for adult central care costs (3% in each year) and this left £2.3m to find next year.

Cllr Dave Stewart had been made aware that conversations around previous ‘devolvement of services’ had not taken place early enough for Parish and Town Council’s budget setting process and the IWC were keen to engage with Parish & Town Councils regularly so that they will be able to arrive at a more informed budgetary decision.

Cllr Dave Stewart requested that as the Isle of Wight Council may be sharing sensitive information that the content of the meeting remain confidential and not be shared into the public domain at this time and in addition the contents of this meeting be without prejudice.

The Clerks agreed that following the meeting notes would be shared with all Councillors present for clarification over confidentiality.

Councillor Tim Wakeley agreed and suggested that the vision paper was a desired list and that equally due diligence would need to be pursued. The IWC would need to be open and transparent in the sharing of information relating to any particular facility or service that may be considered in the future.

Ryde Town Council were now able to evidence competence in the delivery of public services and run facilities and services in a way that equalled or bettered the service previously provided by the IWC. In some areas this had been achieved at a lower cost than the IWC but RTC also recognised that by losing the economies of scale from some services there may be a cost increase.

Councillor Dave Stewart reported that the initial single point of contact for Parish and Town Councils is IWC Officer, Jane Tyler. Following the appointment of the Assistant Chief Executive a reorganisation of staff will be taking place and the recruitment of a Director of Neighbourhoods would soon be in post to liaise with Parish and Town Councils. IWC Officer, Alex Minns reported that most of the items in the Town Council Vision Paper fell under his remit.

It was agreed to then discuss the desired list in the Vision Paper.

Appley Tower – Councillor Stuart Hutchinson informed the General Purposes Working Party (GPWP) that a ‘friends group’ being led by IW Cllr Michael Lilley were carrying out a feasibility study with a view to accessing future funding to maintain and operate the Tower. Councillor Tim Wakeley reported that Ryde Town Council were happy to support the Community Group and would be pleased to hear the findings of the study.

Beaches – Councillor Tim Wakeley reported that the Town Council were now contributing to beach cleaning, additional bin emptying and were providing a beach lifeguard service. RTC were disappointed to see that franchise holders seemed to have disappeared from the beach area. RTC are interested in having discussions with the IWC around the management and operations of the beach area from the West of the Pier to Appley, including the green amenity land areas, Western and Eastern Gardens.

Councillor Dave Stewart shared Wightlink and South West Railways aspirations for the enhancement of the pier and the interchange station.

Councillor Dave Stewart suggested that the GPWP may be interested in meeting with the new Head of the Chamber as he is very knowledgeable in the development of coastal areas. The GPWP agreed that this may well be appropriate to meet at a future date.

Councillor Dave Stewart agreed that talks around the management and operation of the beach all sounded very positive and may well be in all of our interests to explore further.

It was agreed that the Isle of Wight Council would supply any associated expenditure and income records for all of the above mentioned suggested areas, along with any liabilities and associated responsibilities.

Harbour - Councillor Tim Wakeley reported that the Harbour continued to deteriorate due to lack of care and under investment and that better operation, management and investment of this facility should make a vast improvement.

Councillor Stuart Hutchinson informed the group that the IWC were responsible for 3 harbours and that proposals for significant investment in Newport Harbour was underway so that the area became more viable and attractive.

Ryde Harbour was broadly in balance financially with a small operating surplus. He also reported that Commercial Expressions of Interest had been forthcoming for both Ryde and Ventnor.

Councillor Stuart Hutchinson agreed that the IWC would most certainly be open to listening to any RTC proposals for the harbour.

Councillor Tim Wakeley stated that seafront regeneration should benefit the harbour.

Councillor Stuart Hutchinson mentioned that the 3 keys areas for regeneration were Sandown, Ryde and Newport and that any redevelopment should include the sea/beach and not just the land side.

Councillor Jim Moody stated that the whole of the seafront area should be considered as zones which have common development needs to give a coordinated regeneration approach.

Councillor Dave Stewart reminded the Town Council that Councillor Wayne Whittle is the Cabinet Member for Regeneration but due to his local interests in the Ryde area this has been passed to Councillor Stuart Hutchinson. He also informed the group that no decision would be taken around any regeneration unless it had first been through the IWC Cabinet.

Councillor Stuart Hutchinson reported that a paper looking at options for the future of Ryde and Ventnor harbour is shortly to be produced and that this would help inform the IWC of their next steps. He shared RTC concerns that Ryde had been neglected and that this needed to be addressed.

The General Purposes Working Party again stressed that the Regeneration and Public Realm of this area should be considered as a whole and that various landowners needed to be included in all aspects of the seafront regeneration. It was also important for Wightlink, Hovertravel and SW Railway to be included in any regeneration plans.

Councillor Jim Moody mentioned that regeneration of this area was almost impossible due to the ongoing issues with the Ice Rink. Concerns were expressed about the condition of the building. It was understood that a range of options for this zone, including the harbour, ice rink and interchange would be central to the regeneration of Ryde.

Councillor Dave Stewart suggested that a representative be appointed from this group to liaise with the IWC around the harbour and regeneration zones.

Principal Parks - Councillor Tim Wakeley informed the group that a sound working relationship existed between the IWC and RTC with the current grounds maintenance contract.

IWC Officer, Lee Matthews reported that a tender process is underway and hoped the new contract award would not only help to keep costs lower, but provide the Town Council with the opportunity to have more input.

The Clerk reminded the group that RTC currently pay into the Isle of Wight Council contract, as designed by them. All of the mobile planters/hanging baskets are under a separate RTC contract with another provider. The Clerk reported that due to the economies of scale buying into Isle of Wight Council contracts for grounds maintenance had proved to be much more cost effective. The group recognised that it would be useful to have more input into the design of the grounds maintenance contract so that the town and seafront produce more coordinated planting schemes.

IWC Officer, Lee Matthews reported that further information around the tender process is to be provided in September and that Ryde Town Council would most certainly be able to be more actively involved in the contract, design and purchase of any planting schemes.

Councillor Tim Wakeley mentioned other services, in particular, Appley car park, that may wish to be discussed at a future time.

Councillor Stuart Hutchinson reported that a Parking Strategy around Residents Parking Zones would be available in the next 2 weeks. This may impact on some Ryde Streets and areas that are currently free parking at this time.

Councillor Jim Moody reported that small businesses are affected by parking charges and we should be sensitive to the needs of the small local businesses in Ryde.

Councillor Dave Stewart suggested that he would ask all Parish and Town Councils for their views on parking suggestions in their areas.

It was suggested that RTC Planning Committee produce an evidence based briefing paper that may be able to influence the IWC parking in Ryde. Councillor Dave Stewart agreed to action his above suggestion.

33/18

Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed the Clerk would notify the Working Party about the date of the next meeting.