

Report to Full Council Meeting 1 July 2019

IWALC

I attended an IWALC Topic Meeting on 21 March 2019. The main points of interest from the meeting are:

1. *Presentation by Citizens Advice:* A representative from Citizens Advice (CA) gave an overview of their work. RTC's financial support was acknowledged. There was a discussion on the role that local councillors can play in signposting residents to CA's services, including their online information service. It was agreed that IWALC will invite CA to run a training session open to all councillors.
2. *IWALC membership:* IWALC has two new members: East Cowes Town Council and Nettlestone and Seaview Parish Council.
3. *IWALC representation on Scrutiny Committee:* There was further discussion about the need for local council representation on the Committee to continue to be through IWALC.
4. *Concerns about PFI changes:* I reported RTC's concerns about reduction in the frequency of grass cutting and the fact that, contrary to what had been reported at the previous meeting, projects recommended by local councils will have to 'join the queue' on the Safety and Improvement Register, even if local funding is available. Since other councils had concerns about grass cutting, it was agreed to put it on the agenda for the next meeting.
5. *IWALC training:* The usual basic courses for councillors will be organised in the autumn, subject to demand. It was noted that conventionally IWALC training is designed for councillors rather than officers but that officers are always welcome to attend.
6. *Concern about housing targets:* The MP's campaign to reduce housing targets was discussed. It was decided that, given the general concern about housing numbers and the conflicting information from the Government (that says that the IW Council has power to adjust targets) and the Council (that says they don't), it was decided to invite IW Council planners to a meeting to discuss housing issues.
7. *Consultation on Council Tax Reduction Scheme:* Members rejected all three options presented by IW Council, on the grounds that they would all increase the burden on the poorest members of the community. N.B. This is slightly different from our Finance Committee's recommendation.
8. *Local council precepts:* It was noted that precepts on the Island are relatively high compared with the country as a whole. There was a discussion about possible reasons for this and whether or not it was a problem, but no conclusions were reached.

Diana Conyers
24 June 2019