

Full Council - Wednesday, 21 November 2018

Written question from Cllr Lilley to the Leader, Isle of Wight Council

In the light of the Isle of Wight Council's Public Health Department and Strategy now being managed by Hampshire County Council alongside Children Services and Fire Service (Proposed Combined Fire Authority), what other IW Council services could be contracted to Hampshire in the future and what is the future of IW Council as an Independent Unitary Authority if we increasingly become reliant on mainland management of our services?

Response

To be clear, the council is in an interim arrangement with Hampshire County Council for the strategic management of its public health services. A longer term arrangement is still being discussed between the parties.

The council is not in a strategic partnership with Hampshire County Council for the management of its fire and rescue services. It is however in partnership with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority since 2015, this is an entirely different body to the County Council.

Recent research published by the independent think tank Localis, suggested that 94% of councils now share some services with another council. It is a recognised and effective method of sharing capacity, skills and expertise to better manage and be more responsive to the demands on services across a wider area, than each council having its own individual experts on an issue.

We need to be very careful to understand the difference between operational management and the strategic direction and policy of a service. In all of our current partnerships this council and its elected members set the policy, budget and strategy for a service and make the decisions about it. The operational management is done by others.

Let us not forget the success of these existing partnerships especially in relation to Children's services which, through its strategy of delivering educational excellence, is making a real difference to the lives of our young people