

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual Association meeting held at Test Valley Borough Council on 2 June 2006 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Basingstoke and Deane	Councillor H Robinson T Curtis (Director of Planning and Transport)
East Hampshire	Councillor E Cartwright W Godfrey (Chief Executive)
Eastleigh	Councillor K House Councillor A Winstanley B Topham (Chief Executive)
Fareham	Councillor A Mandry Peter Grimwood (Director of Corporate Policy and Performance)
Gosport	Councillor M Hook Councillor P Langdon
Hampshire	Councillor A Collett Councillor A Rice TD Councillor M Snaith Councillor M Woodhall P Robertson (Chief Executive)
Hart	Councillor D Neighbour V Evans (Interim Chief Executive)
Isle of Wight	Councillor J Wood
New Forest	Councillor M Holding Councillor M Kendal D Yates (Chief Executive)
Rushmoor	Councillor R Dibbs Councillor P Moyle (Chairman) A Lloyd (Chief Executive)
Southampton	Councillor A Vinson Councillor A Samuels J Wallace (Head of Director's Office, Neighbourhood Directorate) K Gunner (Empty Homes Officer)
Test Valley	Councillor A Jackson R Tetstall (Chief Executive)
Winchester	Councillor G Hollingbery S Eden (Chief Executive)

Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils	Councillor D Bidwell S Lugg (Director)
Hampshire Fire and Rescue	Councillor M Cartwright
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association	N Goulder (Director) D Allen (PA to Director)

Also in attendance:

Government Office for the South East	C Evans (Acting Director, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Government Office for the South East)
Local Government Association	Councillor M Robinson
Empty Homes Agency	Jonathan Ellis
South East Employers	Jennifer McNeill (Regional Director)

22.06 **WELCOME**

Councillor Jim Neal, Mayor of Test Valley, welcomed all those present to the meeting.

23.06 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Leek (Basingstoke and Deane); S Dovey (Community Action Hampshire); Councillor F Cowper (East Hampshire); K Dufton (Eastleigh Community Services); Councillor S Woodward (Fareham); Councillor K Thornber (Hampshire); J Bonney (Hampshire Fire and Rescue); Councillor D Gillett (Havant); Councillors A Sutton and D Tuson (Isle of Wight); L Cornish (New Forest National Park Authority); Councillor G Vernon-Jackson (Portsmouth)

24.06 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Peter Moyle was nominated as Chairman of the Association for the year 2006/2007.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Peter Moyle be appointed Chairman of the Association for the year 2006/2007.

25.06 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Councillors Mel Kendal and Adrian Vinson were nominated as Vice-Chairman for the year 2006/07. After discussion and voting, Councillor Mel Kendal was elected Vice-Chairman of the Association.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Mel Kendal be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Association for the year 2006/2007

26.07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

Arising of the minutes it was reported that the letter to ODPM regarding the Local Governance White Paper (minute 19.06 refers) had not been sent as not all HIOW Local Authorities had been willing to sign up to it. Hampshire recorded its disappointment that the letter had not been sent and reported on a meeting Members had attended with David Miliband MP. Councillor Maureen Robinson (LGA representative) drew attention to a discussion document which had been produced by the LGA on the White Paper.

27.06 EMPTY HOMES

The Chairman introduced Jonathan Ellis of the Empty Homes Agency and Keith Gunner, Empty Homes Officer at Southampton City Council. They gave presentations on this topic which highlighted the various issues for local authorities with empty homes:

- ! the need for more homes and the fact that empty properties provided an inexpensive solution
- ! the effect of empty homes on neighbouring properties and crime/disorder
- ! the needs of owners
- ! the need to identify the scale of the issue in Council areas
- ! the cost of bringing empty properties back into use.

Consideration was also given to a paper by the Empty Homes Agency and a background report by the Association's Director.

Jonathan Ellis described the strategic approach needed by local authorities and the guidance available. Keith Gunner illustrated this with specific examples from Southampton.

Mr Ellis and Mr Gunner answered questions and concerns from those present including:

- ! Clarification on the difference between empty properties and second homes
- ! The need to address the lack of Council Tax incentive to bring empty properties back into use.

The proposal that each Local Authority carry out a survey to ascertain the number of empty houses in its area was supported.

Hampshire highlighted partnership working within the Hampshire LAA on empty properties.

Eastleigh mentioned that it was working on a paper to submit to GOSE asking for a change to Government policy on empty properties. It was also involved in projects and analysing Council Tax data.

The Chairman thanked Jonathan Ellis and Keith Gunner for their presentations.

28.06 SOUTH EAST EMPLOYERS

The Chairman introduced Jennifer McNeill, Regional Director of South East Employers. She gave a presentation on the work of South East Employers. Consideration was also given to a report by the Regional Director.

The Chairman thanked Jennifer McNeill for her presentation.

29.06 A REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE SOUTH EAST 2006/2009

Will Godfrey, Chief Executive of East Hampshire District Council and Lead on Capacity Building introduced his report on this subject.

The report updated Members on the improvement strategy for local government in the South East and sought endorsement for the proposed actions within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area. The report set out the background to the improvement agenda; the proposed HIOW submission; governance of a successful bid and the outline bid proposal.

Mr Godfrey also gave details of the timescale involved. He pointed out that there was no guarantee that the bid would be successful. He answered questions and concerns from those present including:

- ! that the bids were not sufficiently detailed
- ! that they were not weighted sufficiently in favour of service collaboration
- ! that revenue commitments might result from the proposed expenditure
- ! that too much might depend on new posts yet to be created rather than existing staff
- ! that the timescale was very tight and Member governance arrangements had yet to be established.

Hampshire asked that progress on this item be brought back regularly to meetings of the Association.

The Chairman indicated his pleasure that this Association was playing an important part creating the Consortium for this area.

The Chairman also thanked Will Godfrey for his presentation.

RESOLVED

That, subject to Members' concerns outlined above, the Association:

- (1) Supports the principle of submitting a bid to the Capacity Building Fund;
- (2) Agrees the four strands of the bid as outlined in paragraph 6 of the report;
- (3) Agrees the governance arrangements outlined in paragraphs 7-11 of the report; and
- (4) Supports the outline bid outlined in paragraphs 12-14 of the report.

30.06 THE ASSOCIATION'S ACTION PLAN 2006-2007 AND ANNUAL REPORT

The Director introduced his report which set out the suggested Action Plan for the Association for 2006-2007 and the Annual Report.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Action Plan be approved for consultation with inter-authority groups and partner organisations; and
- (2) That the Annual Report be published on the Association's website.

31.06 THE ASSOCIATION'S BUDGET AND SUBSCRIPTIONS 2006-2007

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Director seeking approval of the budget and confirmation of the level of subscriptions for 2006-2007.

RESOLVED

That the subscription unit of £2,050 agreed at the January meeting be confirmed for the year 2006/2007.

32.06 "FIVE MINUTE SLOT" AND FUTURE AGENDA

Consideration was given the Director's report on this topic.

The report set out a number of potential matters for discussion at Association meetings in September and November.

33.06 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2006-2007

Consideration was given to a report by the Director setting out the programme of meetings for 2006-2007.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the dates for meetings be approved for 2007 and the dates for the remainder of 2006 be noted; and
- (2) That member authorities, in fixing their diaries for 2007, try to avoid clashes of dates wherever possible.

34.06 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Association would be held at Fareham Borough Council on 29 September 2006 at 10.00 am. The meeting scheduled to take place in the Isle of Wight on 28 July was cancelled.