

The Rt. Hon. Ruth Kelly MP
Secretary of State
Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

15 December 2006

Dear Ms Kelly,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

I write to express the Association's extreme disquiet on two aspects of the Bill;

LACK OF CONSULTATION ON UNITARY STATUS BIDS. Hampshire's 254 parish and town councils, including 22 parish meetings will be fundamentally and materially affected with any change of structure. It is almost beyond comprehension that a mechanism for consultation was not set in place before the Bill was published. Please can DCLG consider the first tier of local government when looking at all changes to Local Government Legislation? One might expect with the constant use of the 'partnership' word, that this request should not have to be raised.

DISTRICT COUNCIL'S FUTURE ABILITY TO CREATE AND ABOLISH PARISH COUNCILS. District Councils must not be allowed to abolish parish councils without any check. Portsmouth City Council have led a long politically motivated campaign to abolish Southsea Town Council, and a recommendation to abolish this 'Quality Council' is currently with your department. If this power is given to Portsmouth, they will abuse it and abolish a good council, wanted by the majority of its residents. You simply must not allow this to happen. The Association requests that the Government thinks about an amendment to this aspect of the Bill.

I am most grateful for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

S M Lugg
Director

Copies to: Leader HCC, Southsea TC, HAPTC HIOW LGA Rep



HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION of PARISH and TOWN COUNCILS

President: The Earl of Selborne, KBE, FRs, DL
Director: Steven M Lugg ACMA MCMI

ST. THOMAS' CENTRE, 20 SOUTHGATE STREET, WINCHESTER, HAMPSHIRE SO23 9EE TEL: 01962 841699 FAX: 01962 841647

Mr N Goulder
Director HIOW LGA
Civic Offices
Leigh Road
Eastleigh
SO50 9YN

13 December 2006

Dear Nick

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER AND FORTHCOMING BILL

Following the Executive Committee Meeting of 9th December 2006, the Association wishes to express its deep disappointment, that the principal authorities of Hampshire have not taken the opportunity to consult first tier partners over the issue of future Unitary status, as highlighted in the White Paper.

Whilst it understands that there have been informal talks between county and district partners; any changes would profoundly affect parish and town councils, and one could expect in a 'partnership environment' that the Association would have at least been approached.

It is understood that there is little likelihood of Unitary Status being applied for by colleagues at this time, but even this decision could have been given more credibility with the weight of 254 local councils behind it. The principal authorities need to embrace democratic partnership working wholeheartedly, and not only when party politically expedient.

HAPTC seeks to work more closely with the Local Government Association. It is hoped that there is appetite for this to happen with principal partners?


S M Lugg
Director

Copy to: D Bidwell, HAPTC Member to HIOW LGA

Angela Smith MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

ANNEX 3

11 December 2005

Dear Ms Smith

**SOUTHSEA TOWN COUNCIL – RECOMMENDATION FOR ABOLITION BY
PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL**

I am led to understand that you will be making the decision on Southsea's future following the protracted, anti-democratic and politically motivated, taxpayer-funded campaign by Portsmouth City Council to abolish Southsea, one of only 19 **Quality Councils** in Hampshire.

The Association condemns the City Council's complete failure in partnership working and looks confidently to you to reject the application in accordance with current guidelines. Clearly, it cannot be possible to abolish a DEFRA accredited Quality Council, and the Association is pleased to see the Quality Parish Scheme look set to pass into statute within the Local Government Bill.

The Association is also pleased to have the support of Hampshire County Council in this matter, and is copying this letter to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association, of which it is a member, to express its deep disappointment that a member should take this action against a fellow member.

Furthermore, the Association asks in the light of the forthcoming Local Government Bill, how will the government safeguard the future of Southsea given that the power of creation, and thus presumably abolition also is passing to district councils? As the City Council has been unable to show impartiality, how can it be allowed to adjudicate in the future. I would be grateful for your views at your earliest opportunity.

Yours faithfully,

S M Lugg
Director

Copy to:

Mr J Findlay, CE NALC
Kathleen Kelliher, Rural Communities Division, DEFRA
Chairman, Southsea TC
HAPTC NALC National Council Member
Director, HIOW LGA
John Haskell, Portsmouth City Council