

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Association meeting held at on 26 January 2007 at Eastleigh Borough Council at 10.00 am.

Present:

Basingstoke and Deane	Councillor J Leek G Holdcroft (Chief Executive)
East Hampshire	Councillor E Cartwright W Godfrey (Chief Executive)
Eastleigh	Councillor A Winstanley Councillor P Wall (Mayor) B Topham (Chief Executive)
Fareham	Councillor A Mandry A Davies (Chief Executive)
Gosport	I Lycett (Chief Executive)
Hampshire	Councillor A Collett Councillor C Davidovitz Councillor A Rice T.D. P Robertson (Chief Executive)
Hart	Councillor David Neighbour Geoff Bonner (Chief Executive)
Havant	Councillor D Gillett Councillor A Briggs G Andrews (Chief Executive)
Isle of Wight	Councillor J Wood J Duckworth (Chief Executive Officer)
New Forest	Councillor M Holding D Yates (Chief Executive)
Portsmouth	Councillor L Mason Councillor J Patey Councillor G Vernon-Jackson
Rushmoor	Councillor R Dibbs Councillor P Moyle (Chairman) A Lloyd (Chief Executive)
Southampton	Councillor J Baston B Roynon (Chief Executive)
Test Valley	Councillor T Jackson Councillor I Carr R Tetstall (Chief Executive)

Winchester	Councillor G Beckett S Eden (Chief Executive)
Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils	Councillor D Bidwell S Lugg (Director)
Eastleigh Community Services	K Dufton (Chief Executive)
Hampshire Fire and Rescue	Councillor M Cartwright J Bonney (Chief Officer)
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association	N Goulder (Director) D Allen (PA to Director)
New Forest National Park Authority	T Johnson (Member) L Cornish (Chief Executive)

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	P Coen (Chief Executive) Councillor M Robinson
South East Employers	J McNeill (Regional Director) M Palmer (Head of Improvement and Governance)
Hampshire Water Partnership	A Pitt (Hampshire County Council)
Hampshire Gardens Trust	Mr T Hurrell Mrs J Hurrell
IDeA	M Abley (Regional Associate)

1.07 **WELCOME**

Councillor Peter Wall, Mayor of Eastleigh, welcomed all those present to the meeting. The Chair also welcomed new members and the new Chief Executive of the Isle of Wight.

2.07 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F Cowper (East Hampshire); Councillor K House (Eastleigh); Councillor S Woodward (Fareham); Councillor S Cully (Gosport); Councillors F Hindson, K Thornber and M Woodhall (Hampshire); M Attenborough-Cox and Councillor J Rayment (Hampshire Police Authority); Councillors A Sutton and D Tuson (Isle of Wight); Blezzard (IoWAPTC); Councillor M Kendal (New Forest).

3.07 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

4.07 **HAMPSHIRE WATER PARTNERSHIP**

The Chairman introduced Andrew Pitt of the Hampshire Water Partnership.

Mr Pitt gave a presentation which focussed on:

- The background to the Partnership;
- Details of its membership. Mr Pitt encouraged more local authorities to join. He mentioned that he had worked with Hart Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and said he would like to work with more LSPs;
- Details of the Hampshire Water Festival which had been very successful in the past. He also mentioned that this year's festival would be held in Andover on 7 July in Andover. He asked any other local authorities who might like to host this event to contact him;
- Details of the Partnership's influencing and lobbying work. Mr Pitt talked about the Partnership's planning group and its aims.

In conclusion Mr Pitt asked any local authorities who may be interested in the Partnership to contact him.

The Chairman thanked Mr Pitt for his presentation

5.07 **DEVELOPMENTS AT NATIONAL LEVEL**

The Chairman introduced Paul Coen with a brief biography and reminded Members that the previous LGA chief executive had attended in 2002.

Paul Coen addressed the meeting, stressing that he particularly wanted to hear Members' views. He said that there was a better chance now than for many years to achieve real devolution to localities. There was a cross-party consensus that centralism cannot deliver the services people want in future. However the price to be paid for devolution was that local authorities must "raise their game", take a more critical attitude to developing public policy and break out of the "suppliant" mode.

Spending would be restrained in the next few years following the recent unprecedented expansion of government expenditure on public services. The central spending review would hold back expenditure in all areas except key priorities such as hospitals and schools. In addition local authorities would be expected to achieve efficiency savings year on year. Against the background of less resource, demands would continue to rise from pressures on waste management, adult social care, the childrens agenda outside schools and pressure on pay/equal pay compensation.

The Lyons report due out in the first half of this year would not offer easy solutions. Answers would need to be found both in difficult local decisions and in developing a mature relationship with central government.

Members then expressed their views on many aspects of Paul Coen's presentation, in particular:

- the roles of European and regional institutions;
- the preventative work of local authorities, enabling people to live at home rather than in institutional care, keeping communities safe etc.;
- the blockages found in middle management tiers of partner institutions;
- financial problems of Police authorities;
- the strengths of two/three tier local government but the tendency of policy documents to address mainly County and Unitary authorities;

- the role of LSPs and the variance between their governance and local area agreements;
- the significance of leadership;
- local area working and the role of parish and town councils;
- simplifying Best Value;
- the role of councillors, especially non-executive members;
- the reputation of public services and local government;
- the role of the council in economic development and the current sub-national economic review;
- under-performance "nesting within local authority boundaries" and the need to work together.

In dealing with this wide-ranging discussion Paul Coen particularly drew attention to the need for the local government sector to assist under-performing councils, to influence both the public and the government, and to take a responsible attitude to developing public policy taking into account overall financial constraints. He asked District Councils to give him evidence of policy papers addressing unitary and county authorities to the detriment of district authorities.

The Chairman thanked Paul Coen for attending.

Consideration was also given to a report by the Director on the work of the "Best" Commission which had also looked at the future work of the LGA.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the conclusions of the Interim Report of the Best Commission be supported; and
- (2) That the HIOW Association offers support to the Local Government Association in implementing these conclusions.

6.07 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

Consideration was given to a report by the Director in consultation with the Chief Financial Officers' Group on this subject. Mr Goulder reported that the Government's consultation mentioned in paragraph three of the report had been issued. He proposed that a joint response be considered at the next meeting.

DFGs were mandatory and 40% funded by local authorities - District Councils in the County area. Expenditure was demand-driven: demands had recently risen creating exceptional problems for several local authorities in Hampshire. This needed to be referred to the LGA. East Hampshire District Council had asked for this subject to be discussed at Member level.

The report highlighted both the strengths and problems of DFGs based on research undertaken at Bristol University. The report also set out recommendations from the Chief Financial Officers' Group.

The following points were raised during discussion:

- East Hampshire mentioned that due to the Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital being in its area, many young people required DFGs which were not now means tested. The lack of Government grant had led to a huge drain on resources. The whole issue needed to be raised at national level;
- New Forest felt there should be more support for those affected staying at home. Funding did

not match needs. We should be pressing for more funding;

- Hampshire supported lobbying at national level. The County Council was re-aligning how occupational therapists worked around the County. It offered to host a meeting between district councils and relevant County Council staff to discuss issues and problems and see how they could be resolved locally;
- Rushmoor voiced concerns about elderly people looking after their partners at home and the expense of carrying out adaptations for short term use. It also felt that there could be a danger of residential homes closing because of lack of use;
- Concern was expressed about expensive adaptations being carried out and then removed when not required by future tenants. More should be done to match future tenants with adaptations already in place;
- East Hampshire mentioned that it kept a register run by Ability Housing Association which recorded adapted houses which could be matched to the needs of tenants.

Paul Coen offered to report the concerns raised back to the LGA.

RESOLVED

- (1) That funding problems with Disabled Facilities Grants be referred to the Local Government Association to feed into negotiations on strategy and funding at national level; and
- (2) That opportunities for better joint working be explored between authorities to ensure efficiency in administration locally.

7.07 HOW THE HAMPSHIRE GARDENS TRUST CAN HELP LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Chairman introduced Tony Hurrell, Chairman of the Conservation Committee, Hampshire Gardens Trust. The County Council had asked the Association to consider this matter.

Mr and Mrs Hurrell spoke about the work of the Conservation and Research Committees of the Trust and how it could benefit Councils when considering planning applications. They mentioned that Hart District Council kept a list of important local garden sites.

The Trust would like to hold a seminar in June for Planning Chairs and Development Control Officers. The Director would liaise with the HIOW Planning Officers' Group to arrange this seminar.

Consideration was also given to a joint report by this Association's Director and Mr Hurrell.

The Chairman thanked Mr and Mrs Hurrell for their presentations.

RESOLVED

That the Association supports a presentation to Planning Chairs, Development Control Officers and Conservation Officers by the Hampshire Gardens Trust.

8.07 SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUDGET FOR THE ASSOCIATION 2007/2008

The Chairman introduced a joint report by the Association's Treasurer and Director which gave details of the financial position of the Association in 2006/2007. It also reported the £1.3m grant from the capacity building fund separately managed by the Improvement Board, and the regional capacity building fund for LSPs. Projections for the year 2007/2008 were also given. The report proposed that the subscription rate be raised very roughly in line with inflation to £2,100 per unit from June 2007.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the budget for 2007/2008 be approved; and
- (2) That the Association's membership subscription unit be increased by 2.4% to £2,100 from June 2007.

9.07 **“FIVE MINUTE SLOT” AND FUTURE AGENDA**

Consideration was given to a report by the Director which listed potential future matters for discussion. In addition to those matters already scheduled for the next meeting, the agenda would include a proposed response to be sent to the Government regarding Disabled Facilities' Grants.

10.07 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Association would be held on Friday 30 March at 10.00 am in Winchester Guildhall.