

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

28 September 2007

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT IMPROVEMENT PLAN - THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Report by Will Godfrey, Chief Executive, East Hampshire District Council

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted.

INTRODUCTION

1. The original Improvement Plan was agreed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association (HIOW) in June 2006. Since that time the Improvement Board has been working to implement the action plan, which runs until March 2008.
2. The government has signalled its intention to provide further funding beyond this initial period and so the Board has addressed the type of programme it wants to put in place until March 2011.

BACKGROUND

3. Before we focus upon the way forward, it is useful to remind ourselves of the history of the Improvement Agenda in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
4. An officer Improvement Steering Group was established in February 2005 to provide a focus to consider opportunities for collaborative working and the emerging efficiency agenda following the publication of the Gershon review in July 2004. Although it was clear from that time that an appetite existed to explore collaborative working, we lacked the resources and focussed programme which has since emerged.
5. The position changed at the beginning of 2006 when the government announced it was providing resources through the capacity building fund. Initially this money was going to be limited to financing organisational development projects across the south east but along with other colleagues we were able to convince the (then) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to change the criteria to enable us to commit some of the money to financing projects designed to improve performance in a number of functional areas - such as waste management and revenues/benefits. However, there remained a clear expectation that a large degree of the money would be spent on organisational development projects.
6. From April to June 2006 we worked hard across the HIOW area to create an improvement plan which would both meet the government criteria and also really help us to move the Improvement Agenda forward at a local level. Whilst there has been some frustration about the pace of progress we have had a number of significant successes - such as the market place, the recruitment portal and the learning portal.

THE NEXT THREE YEARS

7. The Board is now putting together the next Improvement Plan (2008-2011). We do not yet have the final guidance from the government but are hopeful we will have more flexibility to shape the plan to suit local circumstances. We do not expect to be required to devote as much resource to organisational development projects in the next plan.
8. The view of the officer Steering Group is that whilst we need to find some ongoing funding to keep the momentum going on the functional projects we also need to signal a step change in how we approach improvement.
9. Two significant factors will drive improvement in public services during the early part of the 21st century - the increasing use of "smart" technology to provide mobile services and the increasing expectations for greater personalisation of services. We therefore need to think about how we bring these two factors into any future action plan and how we can create a HIOW-wide programme to rise to the challenges which these two drivers will bring.

THE NEXT STEPS

10. The debate started at the Improvement Board in July and is being developed at a workshop to consult the wider membership on 21 September. The officer Steering Group meets on 27 September and will prepare a draft plan for the Improvement Board to consider before the end of October.
11. The Chair of the Improvement Board (Councillor Mel Kendal) and I will update Members on these developments.

WILL GODFREY

Chief Executive, East Hampshire District Council

Date: 17 September 2007
Annex: 0
Contact: Vanda Leary - 01730 234085, E-mail vanda.leary@easthants.gov.uk