

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Association meeting held at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council on Friday 30 November 2007 at 10.30 am.

PRESENT:

Basingstoke and Deane	Councillor J Leek T Curtis (Chief Executive)
East Hampshire	Councillor E Cartwright Councillor P Burridge W Godfrey (Chief Executive)
Eastleigh	Councillor K House B Topham (Chief Executive)
Fareham	Councillor A Mandry A Davies (Chief Executive)
Gosport	Councillor S Cully I Lycett (Chief Executive)
Hampshire	Councillor J Glen Councillor A Rice T.D. Councillor K Thornber P Robertson (Chief Executive) R Rutt (Project Manager, Environment Department)
Hart	Councillor K Crookes Councillor D Neighbour
Havant	Councillor A Briggs S Hopkins (Managing Director)
Isle of Wight	Councillor D Pugh Councillor J Wood
New Forest	Councillor M Holding Councillor M Kendal (Vice-Chairman) D Yates (Chief Executive)
Portsmouth	Councillor L Mason
Rushmoor	Councillor R Dibbs Councillor P Moyle (Chairman) A Lloyd (Chief Executive)
Southampton	Councillor A Samuels Councillor R Smith B Roynon (Chief Executive)

Test Valley	Councillor I Carr Councillor P Giddings R Tetstall (Chief Executive)
Winchester	Councillor G Beckett S Eden (Chief Executive)
Hampshire Association of Local Councils	Councillor D Bidwell S Lugg (Director)
Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils	Councillor B Blezzard
One Community	K Dufton (Chief Executive)
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association	N Goulder (Director) D Allen (PA to Director)
New Forest National Park Authority	T Johnson
Also in attendance:	
Government Office for the South East	C Evans (Acting Director, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Government Office for the South East)

42.07 **WELCOME**

The Mayor of Basingstoke, Councillor Warwick Lovegrove welcomed all those present to the meeting.

43.07 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Woodward (Fareham); Councillor M Woodhall (Hampshire); Councillor M Cartwright and J Bonney (Hampshire Fire and Rescue); Councillor D Gillett (Havant); Councillor D Tuson (Isle of Wight); L Cornish (New Forest National Park Authority) and Councillor A Vinson (Southampton)

44.07 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2007 were agreed subject to the amendment of a minor error under minute 34.07 (London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games) which had been corrected on the Association's website.

Following on from minute 36.07 (Joint Working in Two Tier Hampshire) Councillor Ken Thornber (Hampshire) reported on the meeting of Council Leaders which had been constructive and would lead to the establishment of a senate - though the title was not as important as its functions. The new body would provide democratic accountability for joint working and would enable Hampshire authorities to speak with one voice. It would have three or four major workstreams aimed at developing seamless services across Hampshire and preparing for Comprehensive Area Assessment. Specifically it would:

- build capacity as well as shared services
- manage the Local Area Agreement
- develop “place-shaping”.

45.07 **HAMPSHIRE RURAL PATHFINDER**

The Chairman introduced Rosalind Rutt, the Pathfinder Project Manager who gave a presentation which focussed on:

- Key messages of the Pathfinder
- Cutting red tape
- Daring to think differently
- Engaging with local communities
- Working together

Dave Yates, the Hampshire Rural Pathfinder Steering Group Chair and Chief Executive of New Forest District Council talked about the future of the Hampshire Rural Pathfinder. He referred to the recommendations that a rural partnership be considered as an important part of the governance debate and pointed out that this related to governance for joint working (minutes 36 and 44.07). He hoped that the rural partnership could be based on existing structures which he described. He also pointed out the relevance of this rural work to the urban areas.

Rosalind Rutt reported that a conference would be held in Bristol in February 2008 which would involve all the national pathfinder programmes and DEFRA.

Consideration was also given to a report by Rosalind Rutt and a handout from the Hampshire Rural Pathfinder Conference “Setting the Pace”.

Ross Rutt and Dave Yates answered questions and concerns from those present including the extent to which climate change came into the equation.

East Hampshire commended the report to Members and particularly endorsed the Pathfinder’s work on affordable housing. Test Valley specifically questioned why the Housing Corporation did not allow the benefits of land acquired at less than market value to be passed on to tenants and purchasers. Councillor Cartwright (East Hampshire) had taken up this point through the Regional Housing Board.

The New Forest National Park Authority drew attention to the part it was playing in the programme.

The Chairman thanked Rosalind Rutt and Dave Yates for their presentation.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted; and
- (2) That Members agree that the establishment of a Hampshire Rural Partnership be considered as an important part of the governance debate within the HIOW area.

46.07 **COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS**

This item was withdrawn by Councillor Ken Thornber who said he would bring it back when he had given it more thought and consulted on it.

47.07 **THE COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW AND CONCESSIONARY BUS TRAVEL**

The Director introduced the report and drew attention to the risks posed to local authorities by the concessionary fares scheme and its funding. The matter had been considered by the Chief Executives' Group and the Chief Financial Officers whose recommendations were set out in the report.

Winchester City Council reported on a meeting of the South East Council Leaders Steering Group and proposed that the Government should be urged to fund the scheme by direct reimbursement for all expenditure.

Southampton City Council proposed that all authorities agree to implement the national minimum scheme.

However others felt that the scheme should remain locally determined, though all agreed it should be adequately and equitably funded.

New Forest pointed out that bus companies were cutting services and that the scheme was having unintended consequences.

Test Valley pointed out the importance of ensuring peak hour buses could be used - they may be the only buses in some areas.

The Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils and Isle of Wight Council supported local determination and stressed the importance of bringing costs to the Council Tax payer under control.

Hampshire County Council urged all authorities to make representations direct to Ministers.

Fareham Borough Council supported the proposal to continue pressing for national smart cards and smart card readers on buses.

RESOLVED

- (1) That Member Authorities write to Ministers and MPs about the financial problems with the scheme, giving specific examples from their areas;
- (2) That the Local Government Association and Government Office be advised of the financial difficulties being caused;
- (3) That the Association and Member authorities continue to press for the earliest possible implementation of a national smart card with smart card readers on buses so that costs can be fully traced and audited;

- (4) That each authority considers its own local additional concessions (such as tokens and use at peak times);
- (5) That each authority responds individually on the preferred grant distribution formula;
- (6) That the Association also writes to Ministers urging them to fund the scheme adequately - working with the LGA nationally; and
- (7) That the Chief Financial Officers Group continues to monitor the funding of the concessionary fares scheme on a regular basis and alert Members as necessary.

48.07 FIVE MINUTE SLOT AND FUTURE AGENDA

Consideration was given to a report by the Director on the future agenda.

Councillor David Neighbour of Hart asked that the Sub National Review be placed on the agenda for the January meeting.

49.07 PETER ROBERTSON

The Chairman reported that this would be Peter Robertson's last meeting prior to his retirement. He thanked Peter for his contributions to both HIOW and Hampshire County Council.

Councillor Ken Thornber echoed these sentiments on behalf of the people of Hampshire.

Peter responded to these comments. He applauded the work of both HIOW and the Chief Executives' Group. It had been a privilege working with both bodies. He wished all those present well for the future.

50.07 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Association would be held on 25 January 2008 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Hampshire County Council.