

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Association meeting held at Test Valley Borough Council on 30 January 2009 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Basingstoke and Deane	Councillor James Lewin Tony Curtis (Chief Executive)
East Hampshire	Councillor Ferris Cowper Will Godfrey (Chief Executive)
Eastleigh	Councillor David Airey Councillor Anne Winstanley Bernie Topham (Chief Executive)
Fareham	Councillor Sean Woodward Alan Davies (Chief Executive)
Gosport	Ian Lycett (Chief Executive)
Hampshire	Councillor Jonathan Glen Councillor Alan Rice T.D. Councillor Roy Perry Councillor Ken Thornber Andrew Smith (Chief Executive)
Hart	Councillor Kenneth Crookes Councillor Stephen Gorys Geoff Bonner (Chief Executive)
Havant	Councillor Tony Briggs Councillor David Collins Sandy Hopkins (Chief Executive)
Isle of Wight	Councillor Tim Hunter-Henderson
New Forest	Councillor Melville Kendal (Chairman) Councillor Barry Rickman Dave Yates (Chief Executive)
Portsmouth	Councillor Lee Mason
Rushmoor	Councillor Roland Dibbs Councillor Peter Moyle Andrew Lloyd (Chief Executive)
Southampton	Councillor Alec Samuels

Test Valley	Councillor Ian Carr (Vice-Chairman) Councillor Peter Giddings Roger Tetstall (Chief Executive)
Winchester	Councillor George Beckett Simon Eden (Chief Executive)
Hampshire Fire and Rescue	Councillor Michael Cartwright David Howells (Director of Corporate Services)
New Forest National Park Authority	Ted Johnson Lindsay Cornish (Chief Executive)
Hampshire Association of Local Councils	Councillor Anne Winstanley
Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils	Councillor Bob Blezzard
Community Action Hampshire	Sue Dovey (Chief Executive)
One Community	Ken Dufton (Chief Executive)
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association	Nick Goulder (Director) Diane Allen (PA to Director)
Also in attendance:	
Department for Transport	Tracey Allen
Government Office for the South East	Colin Byrne (Regional Director) Howard Ewing (Deputy Regional Director) Cathy Evans (Locality Manager, Hampshire and Isle of Wight)
South Hants Bus Operators' Association	Richard Soper (Chair and Managing Director, First)

1.09 **WELCOME**

The Mayor of Test Valley, Councillor Brian Page MBE, welcomed all those present to the meeting

2.09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Finney and John Leek (Basingstoke and Deane); Councillor Elizabeth Cartwright (East Hampshire); Councillor Keith House (Eastleigh); Councillor Susan Halstead (HALC); Councillor Brian Dash (Hampshire); Councillor Jacqui Rayment (Hampshire Police Authority); Councillor Jilly Wood (Isle of Wight); and Councillor Royston Smith (Southampton).

3.09 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2008 were agreed.

With regards to minute 33.8 (Site Operator Licences for Heavy Goods Vehicles) the Director reported that the Local Government Association had taken up the matter with the Department for Transport. There would be a further update at the next meeting.

4.09 PRESENTATION BY GOVERNMENT OFFICE SOUTH EAST

The Chairman introduced Colin Byrne, Regional Director and Howard Ewing, Deputy Director, Government Office South East.

Colin Byrne gave a presentation which focussed on:

- The recent staff re-organisation at GOSE
- The current economic situation including housing issues and redundancies
- Local Area Agreements
- Regional Funding Allocations

Colin Byrne answered questions and concerns from those present. These included several from Hampshire:

- a request for more flexible use of funding for projects
- a question on how the Government was proposing to tackle credit card companies regarding the repayment of loans
- a suggestion about the setting up of local authority mortgages and banks

Colin Byrne took the point about the need for more flexible funding and agreed to raise it with the Minister for the South East, Jonathan Shaw MP. In relation to credit card debt, he referred to a press release which is reproduced as an annex to this minute.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Byrne for his presentation.

5.09 CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL

The Chairman introduced Tracey Allen from the Department for Transport (DfT) who gave a presentation on this issue.

The presentation focussed on:

- The history of the scheme
- Funding
- Reimbursement
- Appeals
- Problems with current arrangements
- Possible changes - administration
- Possible changes - reimbursement

Other issues including extension of the scheme to military veterans and a series of workshops to be held in February on reimbursement issues

(A background report had also been prepared by the Director in consultation with the Lead Chief Executive for Planning and Transport and the Chief Financial Officers' Group).

Concerns, questions and comments were expressed by those present including:

- the flawed distribution of grant
- the resulting burden on Council Tax Payers which was disastrous for some authorities
- the needs of rural and some suburban communities where bus services were poor
- the inconsistency of re-imbursement across the country
- the length of time taken by the appeal process
- the need for smartcard technology.

The Isle of Wight saw the only solution as one where local authorities simply invoiced DfT with the cost of the national scheme locally. Others suggested that funding for local authorities should be based on actual experience of costs, with reviews to check for accuracy.

Tracey Allen said that Ministers were aware of the concern amongst some local authorities that their individual grant allocations may be insufficient and that they had asked for advice from officials on options for remedying the situation prior to potential changes to the operation of the scheme beyond 2011. She agreed to follow up the points made and report back to DfT.

The Chairman thanked Tracey Allen for attending and for listening to the concerns of member authorities.

6.09 **PROSPEROUS PLACES: TAKING FORWARD THE REVIEW OF SUBNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION (SNR)**

Simon Eden introduced his report and drew attention to the new economic assessment duty in which the District Councils expected to participate. In relation to paragraph 9 of the report he pointed out that Cllr Keith Gill (Gosport) is also a Member of the South East England Councils (SEEC) Executive.

Councillor George Beckett reported on progress with SEEC and encouraged member authorities to ensure their presence at the Regional Assembly meeting in March to vote through the new arrangements.

Colin Byrne spoke about the role of the Regional Minister in ensuring that the new arrangements for representing local authorities at regional level represented the wishes of South East local authorities.

RESOLVED

That HIOW Members:

- (1) Note the Government's intentions on the SNR;
- (2) Agree to consider further implementing the economic assessment duty and collaborative arrangements on economic development once more detailed guidance is published; and
- (3) Note the agreement amongst local authorities in the region to establish South East England Councils, and the potential that offers for delivering the joint regional strategy by working with SEEDA.

7.09 HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT IMPROVEMENT - ANNUAL REPORT

Will Godfrey, Lead Chief Executive for Improvement, introduced his report on this topic. The report summarised the improvement work programme for 2008/9.

Will Godfrey highlighted successes since his last report. There was an ongoing problem with the funding being shifted to regional from local level.

The Chairman of the Improvement Board reported on issues being discussed at the Board meeting the following week. He mentioned that the aims of the Board were to be "quicker, smarter and more efficient".

East Hampshire asked for a code of practice to be developed which would commit authorities to implement joint schemes. This proposal was referred to the Improvement Board.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

8.09 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE JOINT AUTHORITIES' GYPSY AND TRAVELLER PANEL

The Director introduced a report on this subject.

The report outlined the background to the establishment of the Panel and the need for terms of reference. It also gave details of the key issues for the Panel in the coming year.

There was some discussion about the substantive issues facing the Panel and Councillor Glen reported on a recent meeting of the Regional Planning Committee.

RESOLVED

That the terms of reference for the Panel as set out in the Annex to the report be approved as drafted with the inclusion of attendance by the Gypsy Council.

9.09 **SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUDGET FOR THE ASSOCIATION 2009/2010**

Consideration was given to a joint report by the Treasurer and the Lead Chief Executive for Association Business.

The report gave details of the financial position of the Association in 2008/2009, projections for 2009/2010 and the level of subscription to be levied on Member authorities.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the budget for 2009/2010 be approved; and
- (2) That the Association's membership subscription unit be increased by £300 to £2,500 for the financial year 2009-2010.

10.09 **FIVE MINUTE SLOT AND FUTURE AGENDA**

Consideration was given to the Director's report on this subject. The report set out potential matters for consideration at the Association's Annual Meeting in July.

Councillor Beckett (Winchester) asked that a permanent item be placed on the agenda to enable reports to and from SEEC to be considered.

Councillor Glen (Hampshire) asked for an item on developing the skills of the workforce to be added to a future agenda. He was particularly concerned about the need for authorities to ensure the resident workforce could be fully employed without needing to encourage too much in-migration and housing growth.

It was agreed to cancel the next meeting of the Association scheduled for 27 March 2009.

The Chairman asked for nominations for a HIOW representative on the Solent and South Downs Environment Group.

11.09 **ALAN DAVIES**

The Chairman reported that this would be Alan Davies' last meeting before his retirement. He thanked Alan for his support and wished him well for the future.

12.09 **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Association would be held in Portsmouth Guildhall on Friday 10 July 2009 at 10.30 am with political group meetings at 9.30 am