

HAMPSHIRE & ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29 October 2009 at Winchester City Council at 10.30 am

PRESENT:

Basingstoke and Deane	Councillor Andrew Finney Tony Curtis (Chief Executive)
East Hampshire	Councillor Elizabeth Cartwright Councillor Ferris Cooper Councillor David Parkinson Sandy Hopkins (Chief Executive)
Eastleigh	Councillor Anne Winstanley Bernie Topham (Chief Executive)
Fareham	Councillor Sean Woodward Peter Grimwood (Chief Executive)
Gosport	Peter Wilson (Deputy Chief Executive)
Hampshire	Councillor Jonathan Glen Councillor Roy Perry Councillor Ken Thornber Andrew Smith (Chief Executive) Alison Quant (Director of Economic Development)
Hart	Geoff Bonner (Chief Executive)
Havant	Councillor Tony Briggs Sandy Hopkins (Chief Executive)
New Forest	Councillor Melville Kendal (Chairman) Dave Yates (Chief Executive)
Portsmouth	David Williams (Chief Executive)
Rushmoor	Councillor Roland Dibbs Councillor Peter Moyle Andrew Lloyd (Chief Executive)
Southampton	Councillor Alec Samuels Brad Roynon (Chief Executive)
Test Valley	Councillor Peter Giddings Carol Moore (Corporate Director)
Winchester	Councillor George Beckett
Hampshire Fire and Rescue	Dave Curry (Deputy Chief Officer)
Hampshire Police Authority	Councillor Jacqui Rayment (Chairman) Jenni Douglas-Todd (Chief Executive)
Hampshire Association of Local Councils	Councillor Sue Halstead Steven Lugg (Chief Executive)
Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils	Councillor Clive Fleury
Winchester Area Community Action	Paul Williams (Chief Executive)
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association	Nick Goulder (Director)

Also in attendance:

Government Office for the South East	Cathy Evans (Locality Manager, Hampshire and Isle of Wight)
Hampshire Economic Partnership	Paul Kinvig (Chief Executive) Peter Grant (Skills Manager)
Conservative Party Spokesman	John Howell MP

23.09 WELCOME

Councillor George Beckett welcomed all those present to the meeting.

24.09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Keith House (Eastleigh); Councillor Mark Hook (Gosport); Councillors Jane Frankum and Margaret Snaith (Hampshire); Councillor Adrian Collett (Hampshire Police Authority); Councillor Ken Crookes (Hart); Councillor David Pugh (Isle of Wight); Councillor Barry Rickman (New Forest); Ted Johnson (New Forest National Park Authority); Ken Dufton (One Community); Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Portsmouth); Councillor Royston Smith (Southampton and Hampshire Fire Authority); Councillor Ian Carr (Test Valley).

25.09 MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 10 July 2009 were agreed.

26.09 PRESENTATION BY JOHN HOWELL MP

John Howell MP was welcomed to the meeting by the Chairman. Mr Howell spoke about his background including serving as a County Councillor in Oxfordshire. He spoke about the frustrations of being a Councillor under this Government, criticising the master-servant relationship and the feeling that local government was so often merely the delivery arm of central government, with funding frequently ring-fenced.

Mr Howell referred to the Child Poverty Bill setting national targets and local government obligations. He drew attention to local government's ability to form local partnerships which tackle local needs in a sensitive way.

He spoke about the various Conservative green papers on localism, housing and planning, drawing attention to the need for central government to trust local government.

Mr Howell particularly spoke about planning legislation - the 2004 and 2008 Acts and legislation currently before Parliament. He criticised the new system for being too complex and not delivering either the local development frameworks or the development needed. Campaigning - often expensive - and confrontation had become the norm, he maintained. His party would produce a consultation paper soon proposing a real shift of power to local people. There would be three main aims:

- make planning local and democratically controlled
- rebalancing the system in favour of sustainable development
- make planning simpler and cheaper to use.

He spoke about planning at the national, regional and local levels. The regional tier will be abolished. At the local level authorities would be able to integrate planning with their wider "place-shaping" role. The quality of consultation could become a material consideration.

In summary Mr Howell hoped that his Party's proposals would prove to be truly radical and that they would herald a new central-local relationship.

Mr Howell took questions dealing with

- the need for consultation as opposed to speed of decision-making

- Hampshire proposed that excellent authorities, working in partnership, could be given more power
- the need for culture change both centrally in the Civil Service and locally with the electorate forming judgement about Councils
- the need for rural affordable housing and the means of encouraging its provision
- the inevitability of tension in planning
- the extent to which planning authorities under a Conservative government would be able to withdraw proposals for new development
- social infrastructure - "Homes not Houses"
- Winchester requested that Mr Howell consider the "reverse subsidy" whereby housing rents were not reinvested locally
- issues with gypsy/traveller communities
- issues with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The question of CIL led to the point that the tiers of government in county areas needed to work together and as a final comment, Mr Howell promised no further local government re-organisation.

The Chairman thanked Mr Howell for his attendance and for leading the discussion

27.09 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE**

Andrew Lloyd introduced this subject and the two speakers. Paul Kinvig gave the background to the Hampshire Economic Partnership (HEP). Both Andrew Lloyd and Paul Kinvig drew attention to the importance and significance of HEP as a real partnership with business and commerce. Paul Kinvig then spoke about the need to focus on skills.

Peter Grant used slides to report on the broad range of work now under way to ensure that Hampshire and Isle of Wight provide training and support for the development of the skills required by employers. He referred to the work of the Employment and Skills Boards (for the Island, for PUSH and for North Hampshire). He spoke of the many schemes on offer to employers and individuals and stressed the need to help smaller firms and individuals access funding. He particularly congratulated Hampshire on the 16-19 subsidy and the use of the Future Jobs Fund.

During the discussion Hampshire asked about analysing in-commuting. Fareham asked about the complexity of some of the schemes and the difficulty of recruiting a Chair for the PUSH Employment and Skills Board. East Hampshire asked about skills for construction, and Winchester Area Community Action asked about engagement of the voluntary sector in the Employment and Skills Boards.

Paul Kinvig and Peter Grant dealt with these questions and the Chairman thanked them for attending.

28.09 **IMPROVEMENT**

Councillor Peter Moyle introduced the paper drawing attention to the work of the Chief Executives concerned.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the report be noted;

- (2) That the project actions be undertaken as per the report; and
- (3) That members receive a further report in 2010 detailing the outcomes of the Chief Executives' workshop to be held in December 2009.

29.09 SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS

Councillor George Beckett gave a brief update on the work and structure of this regional local government body, drawing attention to the fact that it was now fully controlled by democratically elected members.

30.09 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The meeting considered the report of the Outside Bodies Appointments Panel.

RESOLVED

That District Council representation on Outside Bodies as set out in the Annex to the report be approved.

31.09 FUTURE AGENDA

Following discussion it was agreed that in addition to the agenda described in the report, there should be at the next meeting a debate on options for the future of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association. Dave Yates and the Chief Executives' Group were asked to prepare a report to inform this debate.

32.09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Association would be held on Friday 29 January 2010 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Southampton Civic Centre.