

## ***DISTRICT COUNCILS IN HAMPSHIRE: WORKING TOGETHER***

The 11 District Councils work together with Hampshire County Council and the Unitary Councils of Portsmouth Southampton and Isle of Wight in a variety of ways. This pack of information gives just some examples.

### ***The Association of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Authorities***

All 11 District Councils in Hampshire are full members of the Association, whose objectives are to:-

- promote the interests of local government in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
- assist member authorities in the effective performance of their duties and functions
- pursue issues of common concern to member authorities and to represent their joint interests to other bodies
- develop more effective relationships with regional organisations, and through them to influence policy they control
- provide a forum for exchange of ideas and experience across local authorities

The Association's papers and details are available on the website [www.hiow.gov.uk](http://www.hiow.gov.uk) or speak to one of the two permanent staff, Nick Goulder (Director) and Diane Allen (PA - part-time).

### ***Joint Professional Groups and Staff Networks***

Most of the work of the Association is carried forward by these groups which are shown on our website under "Officer Networks". For example, the **Hampshire and Isle of Wight Planning Officers' Group** (HIPOG)

- routinely monitors land supply and implementation of planning consents in consultation with the building industry
- currently developing joint arrangements for the new planning framework

The **Chief Executives' Group** co-ordinates joint work for the Association, for example the Lead Chief Executive on planning issues (currently Simon Eden, Winchester) will report to members with HIPOG on arrangements for the new planning framework. A case study with information about the Strategic Housing Officers' Group is attached.

Four other case studies are enclosed:

- E-government
- Waste Management
- Natural Resource Management
- Customer Services accreditation

Association of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Authorities  
Civic Offices Leigh Road Eastleigh SO50 4QF

Tel: 023 8068 8431 Email: [hiow@eastleigh.gov.uk](mailto:hiow@eastleigh.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.hiow.gov.uk](http://www.hiow.gov.uk)

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## ***MANAGING WASTE - PROJECT INTEGRA***

When the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit were looking for an example of effective partnership working at a local level (*Waste Not , Want Not* , December 2002) it was no surprise that they highlighted Project Integra, the county-wide integrated waste management strategy being implemented in Hampshire.

The Integra partnership was formed 10 years ago after Hampshire's community leaders decided they needed a long term strategy to reduce reliance on landfill and promote waste minimisation/recycling. The partnership started on the basis that a joined up Integrated Waste Management Strategy needed.

The partnership was awarded Beacon Status in the first round of Beacon bids in 1999. The partnership was further consolidated in 2001 by the formation of a Management Board and a Policy Review and Scrutiny Committee. The Board is a joint committee of the 11 District Councils, Portsmouth, Southampton and Hampshire Councils. The Board has Executive Powers which it can execute within a framework agreed through approval of an annual business plan. This gives the ability to move quickly to exploit opportunities without first having to seek approval from all 14 partners. The Committee's role is partly to scrutinise the Board's decisions but, most importantly, to develop joint policy.

The partnership was further boosted in October 2002 by the award of £5.2m of DEFRA Recycling Challenge fund money, including £2.3m for a jointly sponsored initiative to provide additional composting capacity. In March 2003, then Environment Minister Michael Meacher officially opened a £2m glass processing facility owned by Integra partner Midland Glass and located within Southampton Docks. This project was the result of private inward investment made possible by Project Integra's joint commitment to supply the site with all glass cullet collected in Hampshire for a period of 10 years. The site is equipped with the most advanced colour sorting technology anywhere in Europe.

By spring 2003, Hampshire's community collectively recycled or composted 22.6% of its household waste. The aim is to reach 40% by 2005/6. By the same year the partnership will be diverting three quarters of its waste away from landfill to either recycling, composting or energy recovery through a world class Integrated Waste Management system. All the Infrastructure required for this is either operational or currently under construction.

There is now pressure to meet the demands placed by the raft of new waste management legislation from Europe, to find sites for new facilities and to drive down escalating costs. Integra is a key partner in the Hampshire Natural Resources Initiative (HNRI) which seeks to bring about a further step change in thinking.

HNRI does not accept that waste management is just about "end of pipe" systems to deal with the inevitable consequences of a consumer economy. In all senses it is of more benefit to the environment, economy and society to reduce the impact of products through avoiding waste at all stages in the cycle of production, distribution, sale and consumption through more eco-efficient product design. Where waste is produced it needs to be regarded as a resource which has value and can be absorbed elsewhere in the economy.

In July 2003, the Project Integra Management Board supported a proposal to develop a Material Resources Strategy which seeks to integrate the strategic planning and consultation for three interlinked processes:

- The Project Integra Strategy (“The *2020 Vision*”)
- The Hampshire Natural Resources Strategy (see separate fact-sheet)
- The Minerals and Waste Development Framework

The resulting strategic document will be worked up over the next 12 months to form a route map for Resource Management in Hampshire for the next generation.

For further information about Project Integra please contact:

**Steve Read**  
**Executive Officer – Project Integra**  
**c/o The Old College**  
**College Street**  
**Petersfield**  
**Hampshire**  
**GU31 4AG**

**Tel: 01730 235806**

**Fax: 01730 263622**

**E-mail: [steve.read@hants.gov.uk](mailto:steve.read@hants.gov.uk)**

## ***THE HAMPSHIRE NATURAL RESOURCES INITIATIVE***

The Hampshire Natural Resources Initiative (HNRI) was launched in September 2002 with the co-operation of all local authorities in Hampshire. The HNRI vision is that: *“By 2012 the Hampshire community is acclaimed for its achievement through local action in conserving and using natural resources more efficiently.”*

### **HNRI goals are to:**

- Maximise the role of commerce and industry in driving forward the more efficient and cost effective use of natural resources
- Promote the concept of ‘consumer responsibility’ by ensuring that people have the information to make informed lifestyle choices
- Reduce the impact of natural resource consumption on Hampshire’s environment and climate change
- Establish the public sector as examples of best practice in natural resource use
- Influence change at EC/UK government levels

### **Specific work of HNRI**

Project Integra, Hampshire’s integrated approach to waste management- see separate sheet

Pilot demanufacturing plant for waste electrical and electronic equipment

Business Environment Forum/ Business Environment Awards

Working with individual District Councils on specific waste and natural resource related projects.

Developing links between the different environmental initiatives: Air Quality Partnership, Hampshire Water initiatives etc.

### **Summary**

HNRI aims to strike a balance between long-term change in society and ‘quick wins’ in terms of projects that make a real difference, such as harnessing the economic development opportunities associated with new legislation.

HNRI’s approach cuts across a range of areas including waste management, land use planning, economic development, education, social awareness and change. In order to reflect this cross cutting approach, each District Council has nominated a Management Team representative to act as a link on HNRI issues.

**Contact: Richard Proctor**  
**Environment Department**  
**Room 217 Ashburton Court**  
**Hampshire County Council**  
**WINCHESTER SO23 8UJ**

**Tel: 01962 846070**  
**Email: [richard.proctor@hants.gov.uk](mailto:richard.proctor@hants.gov.uk)**  
**Website [www.hnri.co.uk](http://www.hnri.co.uk)**

## ***CUSTOMER SERVICES***

CASE STUDY HIOW Councils working in partnership with King Alfred's College, Winchester to develop the first formal qualification for front line staff

### **Certificate in Higher Education: Public Services Information Management**

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight can boast highly developed information services. The County Council has four Information Centres based in urban centres (Basingstoke, Farnborough, Waterlooville and Winchester) with plans for a fifth being developed with district and town councils and the CAB, and due to open in the New Forest in October 2003. The Information Centres form a hub of support for a further 118 partnership sites known as Local Information Points (LIPs). All district and unitary councils offer efficient reception services and collaborate in cost-effective shared training opportunities and awareness swaps for their frontline staff.

There are an estimated one thousand individuals working in HIOW's council receptions, call centres and LIPs, in an information-giving capacity, interacting daily with residents and other customers. The role of such staff in generating customer satisfaction is hard to over-emphasise. They are influential in shaping the public's perception of local authority services and therefore must engage with customer care philosophies conceptually and practically. Yet, until autumn 2001, there was no formal qualification which could cater for such staff and their development into Customer Service professionals. It was also evident that good staff were being lost because customer service and reception roles are often not accepted as professional careers.

The Customer Services Development Group (Customer Managers drawn from all HIOW councils) agreed that the government's and customers expectations of front line staff were increasingly high, critical and must be met if we are to deliver the E-Government and Modernisation Agenda. Members of the group therefore collaborated with King Alfred's College to design a specialised modular course which would be low-cost and could be studied part-time over a two year period. The course was validated by Southampton University. The subjects included an emphasis on IT and business application packages, as well as the history and changes of public administration in Britain, statistical analysis and conclusion, and the importance of communication. Accessibility to services and service information is high profile, so the course programme set out to establish a clear understanding of the distribution of responsibilities and functions across all levels of government. Several HIOW councils have provided "guest lecturers" seen to be service experts, in order that lectures are both theoretical and practical.

The first group of eleven mature students, many of whom had received no formal learning since school age, have all successfully qualified with results which have exceeded the expectations of the course planners. The course was designed as a discreet, stand-alone qualification. However, some students have received further support from their councils to invest their study and continue to Diploma or Degree level.

**Contact: Brian Dawson**  
**E-government and Information Manager**  
**Test Valley Borough Council**  
**Beech Hurst Weyhill Road**  
**Andover SP10 3AJ**  
**Tel: 01264 368141**  
**Email: [bdawson@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:bdawson@testvalley.gov.uk)**

## ***E-GOVERNMENT***

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Authorities have worked together closely on e-Government. In August 2002 the e-Government Partnership Board was set up to oversee the delivery of projects arising from the £2m Local Government Online (LGOL) funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

The Partnership comprises the 11 District Councils plus the County Council and the three Unitary Authorities.

Major projects underway include:

**Hampshire Public Services Network (HPSN):** All the authorities apart from the Isle of Wight are now joined to the HPSN which provides voice and data services across a private broadband network. This gives the capability to avoid call charges for telephone calls made or transferred across the network and positions the partners well for joint delivery of services, for example an out of hours call centre, or shared applications and information.

A secure "Extranet" for sharing information will be available in September 2003 and a link between HPSN and NHSNet is planned by the end of March 2004.

**Catalogue of Services:** This "signposting" catalogue allows easy access to all e-enabled services and services information - for use directly by the public through the internet or by front line staff dealing with the public in person or on the telephone. The catalogue will provide access using a variety of routes such as A-Z directory, life events, subject/topics or a full text search engine. The catalogue will be maintained on a devolved basis directly by the individual authorities themselves and will be open for use by other public service agencies.

**Electronic Forms:** A Partnership-wide licence for the forms handling and workflow package e-Work, from Metastorm, has been purchased as part of the programme of joint forms/processes development work. The aim is to reduce costs by using shared form designs and workflow processes.

The Partnership is also looking at how requests for services or information received by front line staff can be passed between authorities without the need for human intervention or re-keying.

The Partnership aims to continue close co-operation on the development of joint systems and services up to and beyond the end of 2005, the Government's target date for 100% e-enablement.

**Contact: Richard Gibson**  
**IT Department**  
**Hampshire County Council**  
**The Castle**  
**Winchester SO23 8UJ**

**01962 847466; richard.gibson@hants.gov.uk**

## ***STRATEGIC HOUSING OFFICERS' GROUP***

SHOG (Strategic Housing Officers Group) meets regularly. The Group represents Districts and Unitary Authorities plus GOSE, the Housing Corporation and the Hampshire Supporting People Co-ordinator. SHOG discusses current housing policy and how we are going to respond e.g. housing for key workers. At our last meeting we had a presentation by the Hampshire Empty Property Forum. We shall provide a county-wide response to the Government proposals contained within the consultation paper "Empty Homes: Temporary Management, Lasting solutions". Other areas of our work include:

- rural local authorities getting a rural housing enabler programme off the ground for a 3 year project which started in 2002. The majority of funding is provided by the Countryside Agency and the Housing Corporation
- joint housing needs surveys have been undertaken to provide a more regional picture of housing need. Fareham/ Portsmouth/ Havant and Gosport joined together and East Hampshire, Winchester, Eastleigh and Test Valley undertook a joint survey approach in 2002. This has cut costs but also meant that data can be compared with other Local Authorities
- a joint approach to monitoring housing associations' performance has been undertaken for the last 2 years. In the past each local authority would send out requests to housing associations requesting different types of information. Housing Associations complained about the work involved when many of them operated in all 13 areas and had to provide 13 sets of information. We now have an agreed pro-forma to ensure that we are all requesting the same performance indicators.

Another example of partnership work has been the success of the Supporting People approach in Hampshire between the County and the 11 Districts. The County Council has acted as a lead agency and employed the supporting people co-ordinators who have worked very closely with the District Councils and been located in their offices. By being represented on SHOG it ensures that the programme is co-ordinated district and county-wide. Local Housing Core Groups in each District feed into the overall Hampshire Supporting People Strategy. This partnership is proving to be one of the most successful in England.

**Julia Potter**  
**Chair**  
**Strategic Housing Officers' Group**  
**East Hampshire District Council**  
**Penns Place**  
**Petersfield GU31 4EX**

**01730 234376**  
**[julia\\_potter@easthants.gov.uk](mailto:julia_potter@easthants.gov.uk)**