

HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

30 March 2007

NEIGHBOURHOODS - A BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE PRESENTATION BY JUSTIN GRIGGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC)

Report by the Director

1. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association has as part its Action Plan for this year to consider the Local Government White Paper proposals for community empowerment and localities.
2. The White Paper makes lots of reference to communities but each individual local authority must tackle the issue as it sees fit. The “added value” at Hampshire/Isle of Wight level is simply exchange of ideas and good practice plus broad consultation with partners.
3. The White Paper proposes:-
 - "Devolving the right to set up parish councils to local government and giving communities in London the same right to establish parishes as elsewhere, provided this does not undermine community cohesion and there is clear local support.
 - Quality Parish councils will have a general power of well-being, with considerable scope to act to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area.
 - In future, councils will be able to determine local byelaws and enforce these through fixed penalty notices without agreement from central Government
 - Revising the Best Value duty to secure the participation of citizens and communities in the delivery of local public services.
 - It will be the responsibility of local public service providers to inform and consult their communities and, where appropriate, to devolve service delivery or management to them.
 - Encouraging neighbourhood management teams to develop links with neighbourhood policing, so neighbourhood wardens, street wardens, Police Community Safety Officers and local police work as part of an integrated team to improve responsiveness to communities.
 - In addition, we will encourage councils to provide councillors with small budgets to address local issues quickly".
4. The White Paper also majors on place-shaping but “place” in this context seems to be a collection of neighbourhoods rather than one neighbourhood. The same comment applies to working with partners through Local Strategic Partnerships - these generally operate at a more strategic level than a single neighbourhood. Neighbourhood action clearly needs to involve partners and is likely to be best if it develops “bottom-up” from community and voluntary groups as much as from local councils.

5. The White Paper is intended to be enabling/facilitating rather than directing. Local authorities in the South East are amongst the best in the country and the Government looks to them to develop best practice with their parish/town councils and community/voluntary groups.
6. Members' views are invited following Justin Griggs' presentation.

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Director

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Annex: 0

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