

POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting held on Tuesday, 25th March, 2025 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 6.30 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr M.J. Roberts (Chairman)

Cllr Abe Allen
Cllr Lisa Greenway
Cllr Steve Harden
Cllr Rhian Jones
Cllr Halleh Koohestani

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Sue Carter, A.H. Gani, S.J. Masterson, T.W. Mitchell and Ivan Whitmee.

Cllr Thomas Day attended the meeting as a Standing Deputy.

17. CHANGE OF BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Committee **NOTED** the appointment of Cllr Abe Allen as a member of the Board in place of Cllr Julie Hall for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

18. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Cllr Lisa Greenway be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

19. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th November, 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

20. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON DEVOLUTION

The Chairman welcomed Mr Alex Shiell, Service Manager – Policy, Strategy and Transformation, who presented the emerging draft return to the Government's consultation on the effect of establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) to cover the Hampshire and Solent area.

The Board was reminded that this new administration would comprise the areas covered currently by Hampshire County Council and the Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight unitary authorities.

Members were informed that the consultation had commenced on 7th February and would close on 13th April.

It was confirmed that details of the consultation would be circulated through the Council's usual communications channels to encourage residents, partners and businesses to respond. During discussion on this, the view was expressed by the opposition group that an extension to the deadline for returns should be sought to enable a Borough-wide survey to be carried out to gather residents' views. It was contended that this was vital in light of the County Council elections having been cancelled. This approach was not supported by the Board overall, however, and the majority view was that Councillors would know the feelings of their residents through their normal interactions with them.

As Mr Shiell worked through the consultation contents, the following comments were made by members of the Board:

Governance

- North Hampshire is a long way away from Winchester – we do a lot of cross border work with Surrey and Berkshire
- How do we avoid being a small outlier?
- Mayoral precept – how do we protect our residents from large increases?
- Government confirms that number of constituent members could change from five
- A pictorial version of the proposed structure might help local residents to understand
- Important the differences between local government reorganisation and devolution are made clear to prevent powers is being passed down and not taken away

Economic Development

- Concern expressed over how the Rushmoor area will get a voice – fears that the big cities will swallow up large amounts of funding
- Easier to see the economic benefits in a city area – less obvious elsewhere

Social Outcomes

- Concerns devolved funding from central government for housing and local transport
- Feels like local transport is disconnected from rest of Hampshire
- Why not take the opportunity to build Council houses rather than housing association properties?

- Need to take account of Marmot findings
- Trains in Rushmoor used extensively for commuting

Local Government Services / Local Natural Environment

- There was insufficient time for Members to consider these areas, so Members were urged to get any views to Mr Shiell ahead of the April deadline

21. WORK PLAN

The Board noted the current Work Plan.

The meeting closed at 7.27 pm.

CLLR M.J. ROBERTS (CHAIRMAN)
