

**MINUTES OF ISLE OF MAN MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION MONTHLY MEETING  
HELD AT BRADDAN COMMISSIONERS' OFFICES AT 7PM ON THURSDAY 31st  
OCTOBER 2019**

**PRESENT**

Vivien Quane	Lezayre Commissioners	Chairman
Alison Lynch	Marown Commissioners	Vice Chairman
Adrian Cowin	Arbory Commissioners	
Raina Chatel	Douglas Borough Council	
Betty Quirk	Douglas Borough Council	
Jamie Smith	Garff Commissioners	
Tim Kenyon	Garff Commissioners	
Carole Lillywhite	Michael Commissioners	
Geoff Gelling	Patrick Commissioners	
Alan Jones	Peel Commissioners	
Eddie Convery	Peel Commissioners	
Andy Cowie	Ramsey Commissioners	
Peter Gunn	Rushen Commissioners	
Graham Connor	Secretary	

**Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Our guest was Ray Harmer MHK accompanied by Emily Curphey (Local Government Unit).

**Guest speaker – Ray Harmer MHK**

The Minister was accompanied by Emily Curphey, Head of the LGU as there had been a specific request to consider practicalities regarding possible Local Authority mergers. Both were clear in their assertion that any potential mergers should be identified by the Local Authorities themselves. Clearly Central Government had a role to play in the subsequent process, but this should be driven from the bottom upwards. Members were reassured by this statement.

There was a discussion regarding potential synergies and economies of scale within Local Authorities which might already be happening in some instances, but which fell short of a full-scale merger. Examples and areas cited including swimming pools, housing, traffic management, civic amenity sites etc. However, the fact that Local Authorities shared Clerks did not necessarily mean that they were ripe for merger. This was a synergy in itself. The Minister said he would take away the option of holding a conference to identify and co-ordinate further joint working options. Members were comfortable with this, but some felt that there was still the opportunity to go for quick wins instigated by Local Authorities themselves in line with general thinking outlined above.

Other issues raised with the Minister included:

- Bye-law updates - it was recognised that this was not a slick process and the DOI did have short term issues regarding resource availability and workload priorities (see below). There were generic templates and standard wordings available.
- DOI staffing – there was a discussion regarding the percentages of office and manual staff and how this reflected on backlogs of work. Members recognised the problems and issues outlined by the Minister.

- Abandoned vehicle removed – Members discussed the authority provided by the Road Traffic Act and difficulties where vehicles were on private land. Steve Taggart was identified as a worthwhile contact within DOI.
- Douglas Promenade – there was a lively discussion regarding various elements of the projects. Douglas Members expressed concern about speeding. The Minister set out to explain the position regarding penalties for late completion of work and how negotiation should not impact upon the work itself. It was recognised that difficulties were likely to arise in such a major project.
- Central database of fixes and mapping – it was confirmed that such had been drawn up by all the Utilities and would be regularly updated in the future.
- Marine Drive potholes.
- Lezayre Commissioners – the Chairman provided the Minister with a list of DOI relates issues drawn up by the Clerk. This was taken away and would be worked on with feedback being provided direct to the Commissioners.
- Douglas sea wall – rejection of planning application and appeal.
- Progress of Local Government legislation – early drafts and some discussion at officer level.
- Local Government Handbook availability in both paper and electronic form.
- Laxey flooding – the Minister offered his sympathies to all those affected. He confirmed that any recommendations from the promised Independent Report would be fully considered. Mr Harmer gave an update on the current works being undertaken and advised that the work on sea defences would not be forgotten. Members were very clear in their assertion that maintenance of rivers and riverbanks from top to bottom was an important task which they felt had been overlooked in recent years and that much valuable local knowledge on this subject was in danger of being lost.
- Climate change emergency – Members were interested in the anticipated extent of Local Authority involvement and how this might be funded. Further details were promised in due course.
- Liverpool landing stage & Steam Packet.
- Waste management – lack of progress.
- Consultation regarding TT changes and road closures.

### **Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Neal Mellon (Braddan), Tanya Mackrell (Malew), Chris Quirk (Onchan), Lindsay Ridley (Patrick), Michelle Haywood (PSM) and Juan McGuinness (Ramsey),

### **Minutes of September 2019 meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **Matters arising from minutes**

There were no matters arising

### **Treasurer's Report**

The report had been circulated and was noted. It was suggested that Peter Hill (Treasurer) might be invited to the February 2020 meeting to give an update on preparation of the accounts to the y/e 31 December 2019 and to discuss future funding and subscription levels.

**AP Secretary.**

## **Secretary's Report**

The report had been circulated and was noted. The Clerk to Malew had advised that Tanya Mackrell had been nominated as both the President and Commissioners' representative for the Municipal Association at their October meeting. Unfortunately, Tanya was unable to attend tonight due to a prior commitment.

## **Climate change/Energy from Waste**

### **a) Climate change workshop feedback**

Carole Lillywhite provided brief feedback from the second workshop along with a link to the relevant page from the Government website. This has been circulated separately to Municipal members.

### **b) Energy from Waste plant monitoring**

There was nothing to add to the update provided by the Minister earlier.

## **Joint Service Provision synergies**

Following on from the discussion with the Minister Members talked about the extent to which Local Authorities collaborated on providing joint services. Again, examples in waste management and housing cited as generally working well (although there was room for improvement in, for example, disabled service provision). It was also recognised that further opportunities existed in the North of the Island and further afield. Areas identified in respect of potential collaboration included vegetation management, drains, and streetlights. It was agreed that this item be placed close to the top of the agenda at the next meeting to allow time for wider discussion. It was noted that there could be a DOI driven conference in the future.

**AP Secretary.**

## **Any other business**

### **1. Public Auditor tender**

Alan Jones reminded Members that the Municipal Association had been invited to participate in the auditor selection process. After initial lack of applications progress was now being made and a meeting was scheduled for November. Updates would be provided as appropriate.

### **2. Rate reform**

It was suggested that this item should be included on the December agenda. **AP Secretary.**

### **3. Civic Services**

There was a discussion regarding the appetite for such services and the procedures and processes surrounding how they should be arranged. It seemed that organisation was patchy, although those Authorities which had a tradition of organising such events felt that they were an integral part of the Authority thanking constituents for support throughout the year. A buffet lunch or refreshments were often included to emphasise this and provide an opportunity for fellowship and feedback. Members wondered if there was an opportunity for a Municipal Association Civic Service and it was agreed that this item should be included on the next agenda for further discussion.

**AP Secretary.**

### **4. James Cherry**

Members were disappointed to learn of James' resignation from Onchan Commissioners. It was agreed that he had been a positive and energetic participant at

Municipal Association meeting and members wished to put on record their thanks for his contribution.

**5. Agricultural premises – planning issues**

There was a brief discussion regarding the availability of specialised DEFA advisers to provide guidance. It was thought that such officers still existed although clearly a brief discussion with the Department would confirm the current position.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Date of next meeting: **Thursday 28 November 2019 at 7pm.**

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....