

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GILL KNELLER re .SCRUTINY - MARKETING STRATEGY – SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**

**Councillor Victor Pierce Jones**

ITEMS COVERED

A Would you please state your position in the council and the sphere which you cover or are involved in?

B The Leader indicates that our financial support from the government is likely to reduce from a high of £18 million p.a. a few years ago to a likely £10 million in 2018.

What is your personal, subjective response to this? e.g. Is it a challenge that can be met without exceptional difficulty or does it appear to be an insurmountable problem involving drastic staff reductions and reduction of services? Can we adapt and reduce on this scale? If so what guidelines would you suggest?

C How do you think this reduction is likely to affect your position, e.g. the work you do and the changes you will meet with?

D Have you read Eric Pickles' document 50 Ways to Save? If so did anything strike you of particular importance, e.g. dangers; good tactics/strategies which we could adopt?

H Various ideas are being canvassed locally and nationally about applying new business models. Would you please comment on them from the point of view of your sphere? i.e. do you see any practical possibilities in your own or other council spheres which might save money?

I Outsourcing (Did you know that fleets of lorries and cars could be run by outside bodies, even the AA) resulting in economies of scale and the use of expertise?) We have been very successful with Capita but there are other companies quoted on the stock exchange which do similar work.

J Insourcing We could export some of our facilities and expertise if we found we had the unused capacity, especially in view of our extensive, new Civic Centre.

K Adopting patterns of other concerns? e.g. Efficiency savings of budget airlines. (Ryanair and Easy jet) Getting residents to pay more for extra services, e.g. as we do when charging extra for green waste collection.

L Cooperative Councils (e.g. Oldham) encouraging residents to get involved in council procedures, e.g. helping in libraries, parks. (Offering council tax reductions for those who do help.

M Mutuals, encouraging the "John Lewis partnership" attitude – getting rid of silos and bunker mentalities. Departments working together.

N Partnerships with other councils e.g. purchasing - (economies of scale) PROCUREMENT HUBS; commissioning; condense and share. e.g. West

Sussex (and Chichester), Portsmouth, Winchester including Hampshire. Looking towards East Hants, any ideas there?

O Decommissioning - Do you have any suggestions?

P Policy on staffing under reduced expenditure.

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Ms Kneller stated her role was an Executive Director serving opposite Tom Horwood both reporting to Sandy Hopkins. Reporting to her are Jackie Batchelor is responsible for operational services, environmental health and neighbourhood quality and Debbie Fox who is responsible for marketing, Business Improvement, HR, ICT and Communications. Gill is also strategic lead for a number of cross-cutting projects including the Change Programme, the Public Service Plaza, Health and Well Being and Partnerships.

Though the matters listed above were the principal issues, Ms Kneller's response engendered an enthusiastic wide-ranging and creative discussion on relevant matters generally.

She took a positive, constructive view of the situation and the challenge posed by the need to retrench on the indicated scale. However she pointed to disadvantages in the council's position caused by relatively low financial resources due to improvident selling of the "family silver" by previous administrations. c.f. Basingstoke which starts off with £9 million income from assets (Despite currently low rates of interest.) It is not a level playing field for us.

She was critical of Minister Eric Pickles' booklet "Fifty Ways to Save" which she saw as late 1990s thinking. e.g. We don't indulge in expensive "Awaydays", biscuit provision etc. We've already implemented most of the suggestions included within the document.

Balancing this the council has "hit the ground running" due to its existing portfolio of policies and the fact that we take advantage of new opportunities as they arise. She mentioned shared management with East Hants and the coastal protection partnership, and partnership working with the new Clinical Commissioning Groups resulting from NHS moves towards organizing provision by GPs as against Primary Care Trusts and the Strategic Health Authority.

But there is a need for fundamental, philosophical re-thinking of our role. The council cannot be "All things to all people". The philosophy should be to encourage changes in behaviour and assist the vulnerable rather than jumping into expensive imposed solutions in matters that are not our core business. We do have an important "Community Leadership" role, e.g. in street cleaning, litter removal, chewing gum cleaning. i.e. to encourage shops and businesses to upgrade their districts, e.g. introduce better street furniture, refresh car parking.

Amongst our assets are our service skills e.g. team provision and being able to build teams involving other sectors in partnership, e.g. community bodies and local businesses. We also have an important strategic position in being able to focus on and import best practice in other councils and areas.

Re Mutuals. (John Lewis partnership type). We should look outside our public sector role, making OUR OWN OPPORTUNITIES. Cf Kent's buying into framework for running and maintaining transport fleets. LGSS : -Northants and Cambridge public sector shared service partnership, Manchester and Southend-on-Sea ownership of airports.

We should encourage staff to acquire "ownership" attitude to responsibilities and consider mutuals and management buy-outs. Forge the principles of Big Society

She recommended officer Sue Parker's Team - Business Improvement consultants who are supporting corporate projects and transformational change across the south and east Hampshire partnership.

We should look for more partnerships with other local authority agencies e.g. in procurement – looking for economies of scale. Housing collaboration with other Hampshire districts has also been valuable and we should look to neighbouring councils for other opportunities e.g. West Sussex but Ms Kneller affirmed that we should look beyond local authorities to find commercial and other bodies with whom we can find a working, symbiotic relationship which could be very economical and profitable.

She did not mention decommissioning but this may not be a prominent issue in her sphere.

## **HAVANT COUNCIL SCRUTINY - REPORT ON LAMBETH COUNCIL PROGRESS ON CREATING COOPERATIVE COUNCIL AUTHORIZED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE DEREK ANDERSON**

### **Councillor Victor Pierce Jones**

White paper initially issued 2010. Report drafted April 2013. 25 pages in easily read narrative style. Consultees (senior officers) : Anderson/Looney/Higgins/Paviou/Hughes (Finance/Legal/ Audit and counter fraud. Total 11 commissioners.)

Much appreciated 25 page report sent to Havant Council by Lambeth Scrutiny Officer Tom Barrett.

He quoted aim at delivering better and more responsive public services AND delivery of services despite an era of unprecedented cuts.

Principles: Council is local democratic leader; delivery through variety of organisations; "incentivising" public; enabling citizens to engage through employment opportunities; services available from variety of locations. (e.g. Youth Community "Coops" - e.g. cooperation between sports/drama clubs?)

STARTING POINT: Importance of EARLY ADOPTERS progressing to Cooperative commissioning. (Putting citizens at centre. See illustration of commissioning cycle and Outcomes cycle)

EMERGING RISKS : need to be task-focused, change from regulatory and blocking to enabling and supporting.

Need for more delivery bodies e.g. buy ins and spin offs; View council as provider; need for more “arms length” independent bodies; defining roles between councils and independents.

MANAGING RISK AND APPROPRIATE RISK CULTURE Strong audits essential e.g. involve Trade Unions.

But encourage innovation, risk-taking and avoiding blame.

Get nimbler performance from corporate support services, e.g. financial, legal, IT.

Make sure there is awareness of evidence of outcomes. (Spotting where difficulties are arising.)

Involve more than the usual “familiar faces”.

Staff should become aware of cooperative commissioning e.g. by training. Workshops to cut down risks.

City auditors KPMG to help audit against fraud. “Heat maps” to pinpoint possible weak areas. Expectations to the standard of existing outsource providers, e.g. Veolia and Capita even with local community groups, the smallest providers.

Portfolio management set up in three streams: transforming i delivery; enabling services; organisation. To ensure regular assurance reports.

Other considerations: Equalities impact: Community safety (e.g. Crime risks) Environmental implications. (Street cleaning.) Staffing and accommodation implications

There follows a lucid table detailing risks, e.g. Procurement problems - accessing new providers. What to do if costs rise or savings fail to be achieved.

CONCLUSIONS (after discussion with advices from Tom P. Barrett of Lambeth council.)

One has to be impressed by the high level, careful and cautious nature of Lambeth's approach to the problem of streamlining and saving money without a decline in customer services. e.g. learning from “Early adopters” though this may have slowed down their restructuring Mr Barrett indicated (May 2013) that the council are only half way to completing their transformation into a “Co-operative council” (or “Commissioning council”) covering all the responsibilities. (Therefore there is no working model for us to assess.) The council is not a Unitary body as we would understand it e.g. with responsibilities for police, roads etc. (but they do have a role in education. When I worked as a teacher in London I worked for Westminster Council and could have got a house from them) so in these respects it doesn't match Havant's profile and is much larger. Barrett referred to a three year programme for savings of about £82 million in a budget of about £300 million. However it would be very helpful if we were to see the final picture

exactly what "Coops" (e.g. "hubs" etc. are created and even walk around to see them in action.

**SECURITY CONCERNS:** One has to notice that Lambeth are very conscious of issues such as tight central control, checking on performance, outcomes and audit. I was struck that they have retained KPMG the City auditors and I queried the cost of this with Mr Barrett. He emphasised that this caution was necessary and hinted at unfortunate experiences the exact nature of which I wasn't informed about but there would be potential for theft of council property and even financial misappropriation in a setting with loose and wide links e.g. looking after sports, youth, special needs and welfare of elderly.