

## **WE NEED THE TRUTH**

We should not assume the recent disregard for Facts And Truth in the USA is just an example of ‘only in America’. We have the same concerns much closer to home.

In an effort to reduce costs, Havant Borough Council (HBC) are working ever closer with East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) looking to a combined Authority. EHDC are guilty of serious governance failures, the rectification of which is a ‘work in progress’ and will not be resolved quickly.

The EHDC Governance Review presented to the EHDC Standards Committee on 8 December 2020 records the following:

*“ 5.1.2 To complete the transformation of the Council there are two key issues which need to be acknowledged to move forward:*

- *The Council’s failure to act in a timely manner, to an alleged culture of intimidatory conduct and behaviour, has been unacceptable*
- *There has been an improper approach to decision taking “*

The report goes on to outline 17 improvements required to re-establish a culture to maintain public confidence and safeguard local democracy.

You might well regard this report, as we do, as equally relevant to HBC.

Let’s look at some of the issues for Hayling.

The Hayling Island Transport Assessment, even on its 2<sup>nd</sup> iteration (the 1<sup>st</sup> was rejected by the Councillors) remains contentious and contains major deficiencies and unresolved issues, but it was forced through with its approval noted as ‘unusual’. This was supported by two biased surveys designed to support the developments. HBC excluded all resident representatives from the entire process.

The Local Plan Housing Proposals for Hayling Island do not take account of the Coastal Partners’ Coastal Strategy which will not be published until 2022. Only then can recommendations come forward for funding.

The Development Management Committee (DMC) meeting on the first Barratt application was taken over by senior Councillors, presenting misleading information and incorrect direction, in particular, to ignore all opinions other than theirs and telling the DMC to approve the application even with many unresolved issues unconsidered.

HBC’s Communication Department has now become a home for their Spin Doctors (see our article in the January Hayling Herald on [www.saveourisland.org.uk/news](http://www.saveourisland.org.uk/news).)

You could well ask how this happened.

Part of the reason is clear from the Community demographics. Both of these Councils have huge Conservative majorities, and probably always will. This allows an atmosphere of complacency as they win all the votes. There is even now an official party whip to keep all the Councillors in line, and remember a three-line whip requires all party Councillors to vote with the majority on threat of deselection.

This unchecked process results in the current situation where priority is given to party directives over the needs of the community, facilitating the abuses of power being demonstrated by EHDC and HBC.

While our Councils are scrabbling around for Community Infrastructure Levy contributions, vast profits (billions) are pocketed by the service providers (Southern Water etc), the land owners and the developers. These private entities are independent, with no accountability to the residents and house-buyers who are paying every penny of their revenues. It's no wonder that the Government, with their Planning White Paper, are proposing to take this process out of the hands of local Councils.

If our Councillors wonder how to regain our trust, then the answer is simple:

**TELL THE TRUTH !!**

My article for February is attached.

I give below the link of the East Hampshire District Council's recent critical Governance Report, commissioned by the EHDC Leader and Chief Executive. It's in the public domain and is worth a read by everyone because the consequences are going to influence the way these Councils go forward.

Thanks.

Dave

<https://easthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/b9669/Supplementary%20Information%2008th-Dec-2020%2018.30%20Standards%20Committee.pdf?T=9>