



Looking Local

Ynnydoil as Scanshoil

January 2016

Help shape the future of your community



>>>> Local authority provision is important. For instance, the services involved are increasing in number and extent and the cost is around £60 million, a larger amount than the expenditure of several government departments.

Moreover the scope, structure and financing of local and national government are changing.

This means that each local authority is in transition to a greater or lesser extent, as are its relationships with the other local authorities around it and with national government.

This is an ideal time to make your contribution in your local community and to try to influence decisions that will help to shape the future where you live.

Of course you are always able to monitor provision and participate in the

debate about local authority decisions, but on 28th April 2016 you will have two additional opportunities which normally come around only every 4 years.

It seems people who are elected as councillors and commissioners next spring will have even more responsibility than they had in the past. Why not stand as a candidate or use your vote to elect someone you think will do the job as you would like it done?

Recently turnout in the local elections has been on average around 30%, in one Local Authority as high as 57%; but disappointingly it has fallen in some parts of our Island and has

been as low as 15%.

In some local elections more than half of the local authorities have had uncontested elections.

How does that square with an aspiration to provide local services at a local level, as surely local people know their own communities better than anyone else?

This leaflet is produced in part in response to this issue.

Uncontested elections and poor voter turnout should be a thing of the past.



Introduction from Mr Chris Thomas MHK, Member of the Department of Infrastructure with responsibility for local authorities

Useful contacts

Andreas Commissioners

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Arbory Commissioners

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Ballaugh Commissioners

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Braddan Commissioners

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Bride Commissioners

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Website: No website

Castletown Commissioners

Telephone: 825005

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Douglas Borough Council

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German Commissioners

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More about what local authorities do

>>>>> These are certainly interesting times for local authorities and their role is evolving, but what do they do now?

Recently there have been 24 town, district, village and parish authorities plus additional bodies for things like housing, waste management and regional swimming pools, which are constituted as joint committees and boards.

Currently their responsibilities vary, but may include waste collection, housing, street-lighting, public toilets, parks, playgrounds and other leisure facilities, car parking, environmental health, control of dogs and the enforcement of local byelaws.

This wide disparity in services provided by different authorities is one reason that local authorities also vary widely in terms of their size and cost.

The largest, Douglas Borough Council, has gross expenditure of around £30million — half the total of all local authorities — and more than 200 employees, whereas several of the smaller parishes have expenditure under £100,000.

Local authorities all operate within the same legal framework, but they have

chosen to deliver services in different ways, for instance some using outside contractors more than others.

All local authorities receive rates but they differ greatly in terms of what proportion rates represent of their total income.

Some have additional income from housing rents, from providing other public services, from grants and from what are termed 'deficiency' payments from national government, for instance for housing.

The domestic rating system was reviewed by a Tynwald committee which reported at the end of 2014, and Treasury is developing a new system and re-valuing properties.

Unfortunately this work is delayed due to pressures on legislative drafting time and will not now be completed in 2016.

The various Commissioners and the Council work in different ways although the structure itself is universal.

Some authorities meet in the daytime, but most meet in the evening. Some of the authorities have committees, others just a main Commissioners meeting. Some political members receive attendance allowances, others choose not to do so.

It is hoped that this leaflet will encourage interest and participation.

Make sure you register to vote

>>>>> You cannot vote in House of Keys or local authority elections unless you are on the electoral register.

And if you don't vote, you can't make your voice heard!

The register is revised every three months, with updates effective from January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1. Applications for inclusion on the electoral register need to be made before 18th March.

You also need to be on the electoral register to stand as a candidate in a local authority election.

Further information is available from the Electoral Registration Unit, Crown and Elections, Cabinet Office, Government Office, Bucks Road, Douglas, IM1 3PN, email voters@gov.im or call 685754.



Local authority modernisation

Collaborative working among organisations

>>>> **For more than a century local authorities have used ratepayer funds to provide services within their local areas. In more recent years the provision of some of these services has been transferred to Government or other bodies or part-financed by taxpayers.**

Proposals for comprehensive local authority reorganisation have been around since at least the Second World War, but have typically been less than fully implemented, usually following dispute between government and one or more local authorities.

Recently the focus has been on giving the opportunity to local authorities to have a bigger say in how their towns, villages and parishes are run.

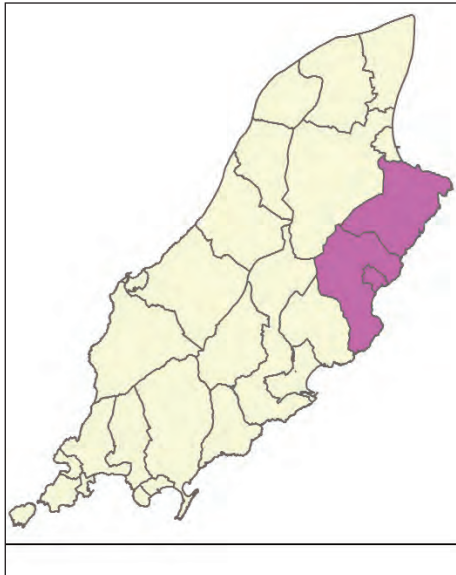
For instance last year some highway maintenance functions were transferred e.g. hedge cutting, street sweeping, verge clearing and weed spraying; and the old 'sheading' name of Garff is being re-used for a new local authority which merges the village and parishes of Laxey, Lonan and Maughold.

Policy development sessions and regional meetings are taking place to explore the potential to identify the current minimum standards for waste collection across the Island. This includes consideration of policies on reuse and recycling, as well as on the operation of civic amenity sites.

Peel Town Commissioners and the four western parishes worked together with the existing western sheltered housing provider to develop a business case for a proposed Western Housing Authority in 2014.

Regional housing working groups are investigating options for reducing the 14 public housing waiting lists and also considering what synergies exist in housing provision and how they could be consolidated.

Beyond that Ramsey Town Commissioners worked with national government housing officers and a private developer to expand and broaden the amount of affordable housing in the north, one example of several similar affordable housing initiatives.



JOINING FORCES: The Garff Initiative

In June 2015 the operation of two Douglas car parks – Chester and Drumgold Streets – was transferred to Douglas Council which is now leading a working group including national government, business and other representatives to consider Douglas access and parking issues more generally.

The Municipal Association, which includes most local authorities as members, is now regularly discussing matters with national politicians and civil servants.

A local authority Clerks Forum has been established where good practice can be shared.

These are just some examples of how national government and local authorities are now exploring the potential to agree new arrangements, the standards that would apply to delivery, and what value will arise.

This collaborative approach to local authority transition has achieved solid progress in a relatively short time.

Getting round a table to work through issues and identify pragmatic responses is working.

The process is aimed to encourage transition and to allow local authorities to organise themselves to best meet the needs of their communities.

Useful contacts

Malew Commissioners

Telephone: 823522

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Marown Commissioners

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Maughold Commissioners

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Michael Commissioners

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Onchan Commissioners

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Patrick Commissioners

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Peel Commissioners

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Port Erin Commissioners

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Port St Mary Commissioners

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Ramsey Commissioners

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Rushen Commissioners

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Santon Commissioners

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Local Authority
Elections
28th April 2016

General Election for Local Authorities

Have your say and make a difference to
your community and to our Island's future



For further information about Local Authority elections, including guidance for candidates and helpful advice on how to vote, search **Local Authority Elections** on the Government website or contact your Local Authority



Use your vote on
28th April 2016

Local Government is **YOUR** Government



/localauthorityelection



@iominfra

The next steps

>>>>> **The local authority elections on 28 April 2016 are without doubt the most important for many years.**

This could be a defining moment in local government and will no doubt have an impact on the House of Keys election.

The range and scope of transformation already under way, combined with the potential for many more exciting initiatives aimed at modernising the relationship between central government and local authorities, restoring local pride, enhancing service delivery and leveraging real cash savings mean this is too good an opportunity to miss.

Make sure you don't.

What do you think ..?

Everyone involved appreciates feedback and yours is valuable.

1. Do you think the transfer of highways maintenance functions from national to local government progressed smoothly, and are the new arrangements working?
2. **Are national and local government making sufficient information and analysis available to see how the provision you are getting compares with that which others are getting?**
3. Is the move to pass responsibilities to modernised local authorities likely to encourage you to vote or stand for election?
4. **How effective and efficient is your own local authority in terms of using the rates and charges you pay to provide the services you want? Do you have any suggestions for making improvements?**
5. What practical implications are there for governance and finance?

In the first instance, please send comments, together with your name and address to the Local Government Unit, Department of Infrastructure, Sea Terminal Building, Douglas, IM1 2RF email: localgovernment@gov.im