

The Future of Local Government:

**an update on recent engagement
with Hampshire's parish and town councils
and with the business sector**

ETE Select Committee, 3rd November 2016

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Look at the ...

- **National background driving change**
- **Local context / Hampshire's story so far**
- **Parish and Town Council (PTC) workshops - and the emerging themes**
- **Business engagement - and their key issues**
- **Next Steps - plans to take forward this work**

National background to devolution and potential local government restructuring



Local context driving devolution and potential LGR



HIOW
(Sept 2015)

Combined Authority

- New legal authority
- Preserves existing councils
- Devolved powers from government



Solent Bid
(March 2016)

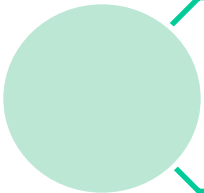
Mayoral Combined Authority

- Combined authority with..
- Directly elected mayor



Heart of Hampshire

Combined Authority



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Hampshire
County Council

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Parish and Town Council Engagement

Early summer – Chief Executive and senior Members attended meetings of parish district associations

September Parish and Town Council workshops, chaired by Cabinet Members and attended by over 120 local councils

- 6th September Alton
- 14th September Ringwood
- 12th September Winchester
- 20th September Chandlers Ford
- 27th September Andover

Each covered same programme and format: Presentations by senior officers and two facilitated table discussions

Key Focus of PTC workshops

How to improve 'locality working'

- Make LG more responsive to local communities
- Better use of local intelligence to inform strategic thinking and help set local priorities
- Maximise resources at community level

Deeper devolution

- Appetite amongst parishes to take on more responsibility
- Opportunities and constraints
- Potential ways forward / build on existing good practice

No one size fits all – consider the full spectrum of ‘deeper devolution’

- Monitoring current services
- Joint delivery / service enhancement
- Agency agreements
- Devolved service delivery
- Full service / asset transfer

Parish engagement – emerging themes

- No over-riding preference for any one model of local government
- Some concern about the size of a potential Hampshire unitary although see benefits in a simpler structure, especially if combined with enhanced locality working that involves PTCs.
- No one size fits all for ‘deeper devolution’ due to difference in scale and resources of PTCs
- Keen to take on more responsibility, especially in areas such as environmental maintenance, but fear smaller parishes would be disadvantaged due to lack of resources
- Want greater influence over local planning decisions

Business Engagement

Led on behalf of HCC by the Southern Policy Centre between August and October 2016

- Initial series of 30 min telephone interviews
- Six in depth focus groups / workshops
 - four workshops by different sectors
 - two specifically for SMEs (north and south)
- Engagement strongly welcomed by business
- Detailed analysis undertaken by Professor Birks of Winchester Business School

Business Engagement - key issues

- Positive relationship with LG but concerns about consistency of policy making; impact of budget cuts; loss of expertise in councils; and uncertainty over UK leaving the EU
- No clear consensus on LGR but cost & efficiency should be given significant weight to any future decisions
- Want to see a more '*can do attitude*' on part of councils
- Transparency & accountability over use of business rates
- Strong support for more strategic approach to planning & infrastructure, including road & rail connectivity, and digital.
- Some support for '*whole area approach*' but recognition of Hampshire's distinct geographic and economic areas

Next Steps

- Continued dialogue with business, including direct feedback on SPC work and ED activity, including work with Business South
- Ongoing work with parishes via Hampshire Association of Local Councils and regular direct communications
- 14th November LGR update to Cabinet
- 24th November LGR update to Full Council
- 12 December Cabinet reports on
 - (i) on proposals to improve locality working & to strengthen the Council's relationship with PTCs
 - (ii) on proposals to strengthen business and ED issues in Hants.