

Jim MacDonald
Chair - East Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils
c/o Rose Cottage
Ridge Common Lane
Stroud
Petersfield
GU32 1AX

14th July, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to you on behalf of parish and town councillors in East Hampshire (EHAPTC) regarding our concerns with the devolution process in the County and to enlist your support to insist that no devolution is approved in Hampshire until there has been a meaningful consultation on all of the proposed options.

Over the last nine months various forms of devolution in different guises have been suggested and negotiated. To date parish and town councils have not been consulted and neither have residents. EHAPTC have serious concerns that in the haste to grab devolution sight maybe being lost of what will most efficiently deliver the best services for the residents of Hampshire.

Hampshire County Council commissioned Deloitte to analyse a number of models of devolution in Hampshire, investigating both the financial and the service delivery implications. Their headline conclusions were that larger scale, countywide options had the most potential to deliver cost savings and would be the most efficient at building on the high performing services currently delivered by HCC. This led to HCC exploring a county-wide unitary authority. HCC have given an undertaking to consult with all the residents and parishes of Hampshire over the late summer.

Meanwhile, however, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight as unitary authorities have now submitted a bid to form a Solent combined authority. Our understanding is that the Communities Secretary is minded to approve this bid. An earlier bid included the three unitary authorities and four of the local districts, including our own East Hants. EHAPTC are concerned that neighbouring districts may come under pressure to join the new Solent City authority before meaningful consultations of all the possible options have been put out for consultation.

Devolution is going to change the face of local government. EHAPTC feel it is imperative that it is not a rushed decision. All options must be fully costed and the service delivery implications made clear to the residents so that meaningful informed consultation can take place. I therefore ask for your support to push for full consultation on all devolution options in Hampshire before far-reaching decisions are made.

Yours sincerely,

Jim MacDonald
Chair East Hants Association of Parish and Town Councils
jim@shanvally.co.uk