



# Hampshire Association of Local Councils

President: Professor Gerry Stoker

Chief Executive: Steven M Lugg

All Member Councils

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2016

Dear Council

## Hampshire Devolution

Following a meeting with Leader HCC today I felt I should update all member councils.

You will all know of the County Combined Authority bid submitted last Autumn?

Recently some Hampshire local authorities have been discussing rival bids with the Treasury including the 'Solent' bid, and a 'Heart of Hampshire' potential bid.

Clearly any Combined Authority bid could be a pathway to a future Unitary Authority?

I append the Executive Summary of a recent research report commissioned by HCC on options for any future Unitary Authority.

The County Council has undertaken to brief the seven District Associations on current positions, before consultation is carried out. We will be letting you know the details of this in due course.

The Hampshire ALC's current policy is:

Combined Authority. The ALC is content to work with any Combined Authority that puts parishes and communities at the heart of its work. Democracy is key, and proper consultation must take place before decisions are made. From what detail has been seen so far, the ALC supports the County Combined Authority, and not the Solent bid.

Unitaries. Similarly, the ALC is unconvinced of the merits of any further Unitaries, given that positive outcomes for residents must be central. Estimated Savings of £40m against a revenue budget of £1bn plus are not great, and whilst any Unitary will be surely cheaper, it will not necessarily be better for residents qualitatively?



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At the LGA Conference yesterday, Cornwall confirmed that when their Unitary was set up, no council tax savings were passed to residents. This being the case, the ALC is ambivalent at best about the creation of Unitaries, or indeed any further structures that complicate and replicate existing structures in local government.

They have a taste and feel of 'rearranging the deckchairs....'.

Nonetheless if pressed, the ALC would support a County Unitary, rather than any rival bids on the basis of full county parishing, and greater empowerment and involvement of Hampshire parishes in Hampshire's future local governance.

As at today, I feel that anyway, post 23<sup>rd</sup> June, the direction of travel could possibly change, and that procrastination might be useful for a few weeks?

Yours faithfully,



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