



The purpose of this Report is to ask Members to agree a response from the Town Council to the current consultation on the proposed Solent Mayoral Combined Authority.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) Minute 116/16 of the Town Council's meeting of 8 August resolved to:
discuss the issues to be identified in Councillor Ed Gouge's paper and further developments in the government's Devolution proposals by email and in an informal meeting with a view to agreeing a response to the consultation at the 12 September Town Council meeting.
- b) Councillor Ed Gouge's paper was circulated to Members on 22 August and a copy is attached to this Report.
- c) Also circulated to Members in advance of the informal meeting were the responses to the earlier consultation the Isle of Wight Council conducted – as required by the process – with 27 local stakeholders, including Town and Parish Councils through the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils.
- d) The presentation given by the Isle of Wight Council's Chief Executive and Leader to a meeting with Town and Parish Council representatives, attended by Councillor Leigh Geddes, on 1 September was also circulated to Members on 2 September.

2) STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES.

- a) The document provided on request by the Isle of Wight Council of the stakeholder responses is also attached to this Report.
- b) Of the 14 Town and Parish Councils listed:
 - o two: Chale Parish Council and Shanklin Town Council, are listed without a response;
 - o two: Ryde Town Council and Yarmouth Town Council are listed as *not supportive*;
 - o four: Cowes Town Council, Ventnor Town Council, Nettlestone & Seaview Parish Council and Havenstreet & Ashley Parish Council are listed as *supportive*
- c) The other six asked questions and/or made suggestions but remained neutral.

3) INFORMAL MEETING

- a) The informal meeting, attended by seven Members and the Clerks, took place on Monday 5 September.
- b) The consensus of the meeting was that the participation of the Isle of Wight Council in the proposed Solent Mayoral Combined Authority be supported and the Isle of Wight Council be asked to secure clarification in the following areas, as summarised by Councillor Ed Gouge:
 - o The arrangements for the democratic accountability of the MCA need to be developed. There should be an established process whereby the Leaders of the three Councils and the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee report back to their Councils in meetings open to the public. There should also be a place for Isle of Wight Town and Parish Councils on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable accountability to these bodies as well.
 - o It needs to be clear whether the MCA will take over responsibility for the Island Roads contract.
 - o If the MCA is to take over powers which will become available when the Bus Services Bill becomes law, then the Isle of Wight Council and Town and Parish Councils need to be involved in discussions about improvements to individual routes.

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- Although the encouragement of advanced manufacturing is to be welcomed, the setting of economic development priorities should, from the beginning, recognise the importance of tourism, agriculture and small firms providing services to the Isle of Wight economy and ensure that investment also occurs in these sectors.
 - There needs to be greater clarity on the distribution of business rates and, in particular, how the redistribution of business rates both nationally and within the MCA will operate. If the national redistribution merely replaces the loss of Government grants then the critical financial position of the Isle of Wight Council will not be improved. It is difficult to imagine that a redistribution of business rates within the MCA can greatly help the Isle of Wight Council given the funding that Southampton and Portsmouth Councils need to deal with problems in their area.

4) RECOMMENDATION

The Town Council is asked to consider the conclusions of the informal meeting and, after agreeing any amendments to the text in 3b) above, to authorise its Clerk to submit that as the Town Council's response to the current consultation.
