

Consultation on the Proposal from Hampshire County Council & East Hampshire District Council

Known as '**The Alternative Option**' because it only has 4 Unitary Authorities in total:

Mid North: Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire, Hart, Rushmoor, Winchester.

West: Eastleigh, New Forest, Southampton, Test Valley.

South East: Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth.

Isle of Wight: Isle of Wight to remain unchanged

Questions to be answered for each option.

Firstly, every respondent has to tell the Government about themselves:

1. What is your name?

2. Are you responding as an individual or providing an official response on behalf of an organisation?

Individual or Organisation

3. Have you been invited to respond as a named consultee?

Yes or No

4. In which council area is your address? (If you are responding as an individual this is your home address. If you are responding as an organisation this is your organisation address)

Hampshire County Council

5. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please let us know the organisation's name:

6. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please let us know your position within the organisation e.g.

7. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please select the type of organisation from the options below:

Business / Education / Health

Local government - parish/town council or other

Other public sector - National body / Police and Fire / Voluntary sector

Other

8. What is your email address?

Secondly, read statement on no personal data and tick the box before proceeding with the consultation

The sections for each proposal in this consultation include free text boxes where you can explain your answers.

Then comes the questions about each of the 4 proposals on which the Government is seeking views. There are dropdown answers for each question, please select one.

Rowlands Castle Parish Council responses:

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal suggests councils that are based on sensible geographies and economic areas?

Strongly agree

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will be able to deliver the outcomes they describe in the proposal?

Strongly agree

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils are the right size to be efficient, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks?

Strongly agree

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that this proposal will put local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing, particularly given that some councils in the area are in receipt of Exceptional Financial Support?

Strongly agree

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed councils will deliver high quality, sustainable public services?

Strongly agree

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal has been informed by local views and will meet local needs?

Strongly agree

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that establishing the councils in this proposal will support devolution arrangements, for example, the establishment of a strategic authority?

Strongly agree

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposal enables stronger community engagement and gives the opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment?

Strongly agree

9. If you would like to, please use the free text box to explain the answers you have provided to questions 1-8 referring to the question numbers as part of your answer. You may also use the box to provide any other comments you have on this proposal.

Text box comments as follows:

Rowlands Castle Parish Council considers that, to achieve an effective and easily delivered changeover to the new Unitary Authorities (UAs), it will be by far the best thing to maintain the proven upper-tier services currently delivered by HCC and Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils through the transition period. By using the three existing authorities above as core to the proposed new UAs that will enable much of what is already being delivered by them to continue with relatively little upset. That is why this proposal is the best; it allows for the fastest and best route to transform services across Hampshire and the Solent. It is agreed that the IoW must remain a separate UA, albeit with far fewer people, because of its unique situation. Working across the Solent with another UA will not be a success.

The proposal has been well thought out and used an evidence-based approach. It has taken good notice of the Government's criteria for the LGR to be implemented, does not waste money on entirely unnecessary actions like boundary changes and keeps the running costs down for the new UAs by only having 3 of them, so reducing the numbers of upper tier management and other costs that would be incurred from running a 4th UA but spread across fewer residents in each UA. It enables good savings to be made each year (vital for keeping costs down for residents heavily impacted by today's cost of living) whilst providing stability during the change and pretty decent area representation. It also locates the 2 National Parks in different UAs, important because of the pressure they place on land availability for housing development and businesses.

Both the proposed Mid-North and the West UAs have a good balance of rural and urban settlements and land and thus a balance of resident representation. One does not dominate the other in those UAs. The South-East UA is effectively urban and semi-urban and therefore there is no imbalance as there very much would be if the Option 1A with 5 UAs and drawing in rural parishes was adopted for this area.

Although this option has mainland population sizes somewhat greater than the 500,000 suggested by Government for each UA there is greater financial benefit in having UAs of higher population because of the financial savings to be made and the bulk buying of services would be cheaper. Having only 3 broadly equally-sized UAs in population terms working with the Mayoral Combined Authority will be better for regional collaboration and making things happen.

Although the geographic areas vary in size considerably compared to Option 2, which is the second-best option in our opinion, the overall ability to deliver the most cost-effective changeover is what makes this option the best. In the end it is all about delivering value for money and keeping long term operating costs down to a sensible level in today's financially challenging environment.

Finally, the mantra of implementing any major change that will affect so many people is 'Keep It Simple'. If you select a greater number of UAs the changeover will be more challenging and will not deliver the necessary savings. Therefore this 'Alternative Option' clearly stands out as the best way forward for Hampshire and the IoW.

10. I confirm that I have not included any information that identifies an individual in the free text box.

Yes