



DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 89/15

12 OCTOBER 2015

The purpose of this paper is to ask Members to consider further whether the Town Council should seek direct engagement in the ongoing Devolution discussions involving the 15 Councils of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) Following an initial discussion of the proposals as set out in the document *Devolution for the People of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* at its meeting of 14 September the Town Council resolved that the matter be considered further at this meeting.
- b) No further details of the ongoing discussions among the 15 Councils have been made public but the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued an Information Sheet headed *Devolution Deals, the role of Neighbourhoods* a copy of which is attached.

2) DCLG ADVICE

- a) There are two sections of the Information Sheet that make clear the Government's view that there is a role for Town and Parish Councils within discussions of Devolution proposals.
 - *Ministers have said that where feasible, devolution of decision-making and service delivery should be extended to community level: town councils, civil parishes, voluntary organisations, residents' associations, faith groups etc.*
- b) It emphasises that engagement at neighbourhood level is a continuation of their recent programmes, including Our Place.
 - *Evidence also shows that devolution to neighbourhoods delivers better value for money. Localities supported under Our Place produced cost benefit analyses that showed for every pound spent implementing local service models, the financial return to the state was just under £3.*
- c) Its suggestions for action opens with:
 - *Approach those working up Devolution Deals in your area and offer to help with designing and delivering their proposals.*

3) RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to consider whether the Town Council should seek any engagement with the Devolution proposals and, if so, what actions it should take.

DEVOLUTION DEALS: THE ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

What is a Devolution Deal?

Devolution Deals are agreements to devolve powers and spending on public services away from Whitehall departments to local areas. These areas are represented by consortiums of local authorities, coming together on a county-wide or sub-regional basis. Devolution deals are a bottom up process to allow areas to drive their own economic growth and the transformation of public services. Initial proposals have been put forward by 37 areas in England and these are now in detailed negotiations with Government. Cornwall's Deal has already been announced and it is expected that there will be several more before the end of the calendar year.

For some years the Government has been working with key partner organisations to empower local people to play a role in influencing and scrutinising decisions about their area, including taking control of some services. DCLG programmes like Neighbourhood Planning, Our Place and Delivering Differently and help with asset transfer are making a real difference, as is our support for parishes and town councils. The Government wants to see Deals including proposals for further devolution of services to neighbourhoods – broadening and deepening the work that is already happening.

How are Deals relevant to local neighbourhoods?

- Ministers have said that where feasible, devolution of decision-making and service delivery should be extended to community level: town councils, civil parishes, voluntary organisations, residents' associations, faith groups etc. They are always pleased to hear about good examples of this.
- The Deals should help accelerate devolution to neighbourhoods: delivering improved outcomes through better sequencing and coordination of activity and better tailoring of services to suit local needs; reducing demand on services by allowing problems to be tackled early; and building the resilience of communities.
- Evidence also shows that devolution to neighbourhoods delivers better value for money. Localities supported under Our Place produced cost benefit analyses that showed for every pound spent implementing local service models, the financial return to the state was just under £3. Exemplars in worklessness and health and social care show even higher average returns.

How can my organisation/parish/town council take advantage of this opportunity?

Some suggestions:

- Approach those working up Devolution Deals in your area and offer to help with designing and delivering their proposals. Your local Council can provide contact details.
- If you are already delivering services effectively at a neighbourhood level, make sure your local Deal partnership knows about this and builds it into their programme.
- Make links with other parish and town councils, VCS organisations, residents' associations, faith groups etc. in your county or region, so as to present a joined-up approach.
- Pull together good examples of where the involvement of neighbourhoods/community groups in decision making and/or service delivery has worked well in your area, and back these up with facts and figures. A good example is below.
- Get advice from expert organisations such as Locality, NALC, SLCC and NAVCA.
- Visit the Just Act Forum webpage (www.justact.org.uk/forums) and tell other areas about what you are doing. And we in Government are always keen to hear people's experience.