



Date: 4 May 2016
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To: The Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
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The Rt Hon George Osborne MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Copy to: James Wharton MP, Minister for Local Growth and the Northern Powerhouse

Lord Jim O'Neill, Commercial Secretary to the Treasury

Dear Ministers

DEVOLUTION DEAL FOR THE HEART OF HAMPSHIRE

The Heart of Hampshire is one of the most productive areas of southern England, contributing over £22bn to the national economy and boasting a highly-skilled workforce, ambitious growth plans, excellent public services and world-famous natural assets including two National Parks. Above all, our strategic location close to London and its airports, the M3/M4/M25 corridors and the south coast ports means that we have potential to contribute significantly more.

I am pleased to confirm that, as Leaders of the six district councils in the area, together with the Chair of Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, we want to seize the opportunity to build on this success. By embracing devolution and taking control of our shared future, we can not only benefit our local communities, but help grow the UK economy.

I am therefore writing on behalf of us all to confirm our willingness to enter into immediate discussions about the potential for a devolution deal based on the attached draft documents. All parties are aware of the role of the County Council if this deal is to progress and recognise the County Council is not resolved to support the proposal prior to careful consultation with the public, not least because of its deep concerns about the splitting of the county. I can confirm that our proposed deal is predicated on the basis of a directly-elected mayor.

As you will appreciate, this offer is conditional on the proposals within the draft deal being agreed, in particular:



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



- A substantial additional investment fund to be allocated to Heart of Hampshire, following the model set out in published devolution deals;
- Arrangements for working closely with Hampshire County Council and in parallel with the proposed Solent Combined Authority to ensure symmetrical delivery of key services and a joined-up approach to public sector reform and economic growth across all of Hampshire

In keeping with the principles of local democracy, we will ensure that the views of our councillors and residents are taken into account at appropriate stages in the process, in addition to the need for ratification of the final deal by each individual council.

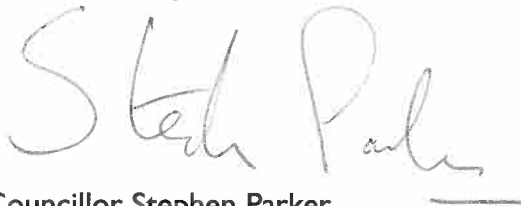
We also believe that our exceptional record of delivery as partners in Enterprise M3 – acknowledged to be one of the leading LEPs in the country – should give you cause to consider our offer very seriously.

In our view, the Heart of Hampshire proposal offers the Government a pragmatic and deliverable solution that could help bring the benefits of devolution to the 1.9m people and 80,000 businesses across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight area as a whole.

The timetable is tight but we feel we are now in a position where we would benefit from an opportunity to meet you at your earliest convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Stephen Parker
Leader, Hart District Council and
Chairman of the Heart of Hampshire Leaders Group