

14 September 2016

Solent Local Enterprise Partnership
Second Floor, Building 1000
Lakeside North Harbour
Western Road
Portsmouth
PO6 3EN

Institution of Civil Engineers
One Great George Street
Westminster
London SW1P 3AA
United Kingdom

t +44 (0)20 7665 2362
e max.sugarman@ice.org.uk
www.ice.org.uk

Submitted electronically via:
www.solentdeal.co.uk/have-your-say

Dear Sir/Madam

ICE's Response to the Solent Deal Draft Scheme Consultation (September 2016)

Introduction

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) is an international membership organisation that promotes and advances civil engineering around the world. ICE is a qualifying body, a centre for the exchange of specialist knowledge, and a provider of resources to encourage innovation and excellence in the profession worldwide.

ICE South East England welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation. Our State of the Nation: Devolution report, published in June 2016, provides a number of recommendations for combined authority devolution bids and this response has been developed through application of that report to the Solent area.¹

Our Response

1. What is a combined authority?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principle of moving power and funding for the economy, transport and jobs from central government to groups of local councils working together?

Strongly Agree

ICE South East England supports the devolution of decision-making powers, particularly over infrastructure policy. We support the 'no one size fits all' approach; that devolution deals must be made to reflect the area's unique needs and circumstances.

2. The Solent Proposal

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principle of the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton councils and the Solent LEP working more closely together?

Strongly Agree

The Solent Combined Authority area, made up of the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton do make up a coherent and practical area which would benefit from the creation of a combined authority. The region also has

¹ [ICE State of the Nation 2016: Devolution, June 2016](#)

similar infrastructure needs, particularly marine and coastal engineering, and economic make-up, with shipping, manufacturing and maritime industries.

3. What will it do?

Do you agree or disagree with each of the areas the Solent Combined Authority is seeking to devolve powers as outlined in the draft Scheme?

*Support for businesses to grow: **Agree***

*Skills and Employment: **Agree***

Investment in people and training is necessary to support the engineering and infrastructure sectors. The development of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) will be especially important to the Solent Combined Authority due to the type of industries in the region. To address the growing skills gap in the UK, the Solent Combined Authority should identify opportunities for government, industry and academic institutions to invest in training and skills. With two large universities and several large sectors, ICE South East England believes the region has the capability to deliver this, but that there needs to be a joined up approach to skills and training provision as indicated in the proposals.

*Housing and infrastructure planning: **Agree***

The Solent Combined Authority must take a systems-based approach to infrastructure, looking at the region's requirements strategically and holistically. For example, the Solent Combined Authority's must consider the effect of coastal flooding on the transport network or the effect of new rail links on the energy system.

*Transport: **Agree***

The Solent Deal sets out that the Solent Combined Authority will "fulfil directly or commission the role of Transport Authority". ICE South East England agrees with the creation of sub-national transport authorities and believes the Solent region could benefit from a joined-up approach to rail, bus and road services. ICE South East England suggests the Combined Authority works to examine how other Passenger Transport Executives/Integrated Transport Authorities, like Transport for London, Transport for Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and West Midlands work to ensure best practice for the Solent region.

Are there any other powers that you think the Solent Combined Authority should seek to secure from government either now or in the future?

Digital infrastructure must be considered within the Solent devolution agreement, with the agreement including funding provision for the research, development and delivery of digital infrastructure. The Solent Combined Authority should also work with central Government departments to access any data that is currently or could be used to improve the delivery of infrastructure services.

To be fully effective at planning and delivering infrastructure, the Solent Combined Authority, should also seek greater powers to raise funds to pay for the infrastructure the area requires.

4. How will it work?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the preferred option as set out in the draft Governance Scheme seeking to devolve powers to the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority?

Strongly Agree

Do you have any comments on the proposal set out in the draft Governance Scheme?

ICE South East England supports Option 4, the preferred choice of the three local authorities, as it is the option with the greatest ability and scope to deliver the region's infrastructure requirements.

5. The Mayor

Do you have any comments on the governance or decision making arrangements outlined in the draft Governance Scheme?

ICE South East England believes that directly elected mayors should not be a pre-requisite for devolution deals, but Option 4 – the preferred option – does seem to offer the best opportunity for the region. It is crucial that whatever governance arrangements are made, there are the structures for clear leadership and accountability.

Other than the further scrutiny committee, do you have any further suggestions about how the new combined authority could be held to account?

NA

Final Views

Are there any impacts or alternatives you feel have not been considered in developing the proposals for a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority?

Devolution, particularly over infrastructure, offers a significant opportunity to not only rebalance the economy and increase growth, but also ensure future development of social and environmental benefits. The Solent Combined Authority should take a rounded approach to development, including social and environmental goals rather than only focusing on economic growth. This includes measurements like sustainability and quality of life.

Do you have any other comments or suggestions relating to the creation of a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority?

ICE South East England encourages the team behind the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority to examine the recommendations set out in our [State of the Nation: Devolution Report](#). As a membership organisation of 11,000 engineers across the South East of England, we offer our expertise in developing best practices and strategies, particularly in regard to the infrastructure sector.

Yours sincerely,



Suzanne Moroney

Director, ICE South East England