

Solent Deal – Consultation report

Introduction

1. The Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council undertook consultation regarding proposals to establish a Mayoral Combined Authority in the Solent region between 22 July 2016 and 18 September 2016.
2. The Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton Councils are in the process of negotiating a deal with government to secure extra powers and funding for the region. The aim of the deal is to improve economic prosperity by bringing decision-making and accountability closer to local people and enabling funds to be spent on tackling local problems and taking advantage of local opportunities to improve economic growth.
3. Across July 2016, the Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council held Cabinet meetings and agreed to undertake a consultation on the draft Governance Scheme with the public and key stakeholders to inform the final version of the scheme and to inform the local decision about what happens next. Conducting a comprehensive and meaningful consultation with the residents and stakeholders of the three authorities is a key step in the Governance Review process.
4. This report outlines the principles, process and outcome of the public consultation on the proposed Solent Mayoral Combined Authority. It both supplements and contextualises the summary of the consultation included within the Cabinet report. The consultation was led by the Southampton City Council Research and Consultation team working closely with the policy, communication and consultation teams from the other local authorities.

Aims

5. The aim of this consultation was to give members of the public, and other stakeholders an opportunity to review and comment on the proposals surrounding the creation of a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority. The consultation gathered views on the principle of devolving powers, the proposed powers and any potential future powers. It also gathered views on the idea of the authorities and the Solent LEP working together and on the proposed option to take forward.
6. The consultation was not a vote, it enabled participants to read about the deal, answer questions and make comments that will feed into the creation of the final Governance Scheme. The consultation also concluded the process of the Governance Review.
7. The consultation gives respondents the opportunity to raise any impacts they feel the proposal might have that have not been considered and to suggest alternatives to the proposal, all will be considered in the development of the final version of the Governance Scheme.

Consultation principles

8. The three local authorities conducting this consultation take their duty to consult with residents and stakeholders on the devolution proposals very seriously. The consultation principles used ensure all consultation is:
 - Inclusive: so that everyone in the region has the opportunity to express their views.
 - Informative: so that people have adequate information about the proposals, what different options mean, and a balanced and fair explanation of the potential impact, particularly the equality and safety impact.

- Understandable: by ensuring that the language used to communicate is simple and clear and that efforts are made to reach all stakeholders, for example people who are non-English speakers or disabled people.
 - Appropriate: by targeting people who are more likely to be affected and using a more tailored approach to get their feedback, complemented by a general approach to all residents, staff, businesses and partners.
 - Meaningful: by ensuring decision makers have the full consultation feedback information so that they can make informed decisions.
 - Reported: by letting consultees know what was done with their feedback.
9. The three authorities are committed to consultations of the highest standard, which are meaningful, and comply with the following legal standards:
- Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage
 - Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response
 - Adequate time must be given for consideration and response
 - The product of consultation must be carefully taken into account.
10. The Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council made a decision to run the consultation for over eight weeks from 22 July to 18 September 2016, many other consultations on establishing a combined authority have run for six weeks. It was felt that this period allowed for any interruption that could be caused by the summer holiday season. It also ensured that it ran across three calendar months; July, August and September.

Approach and methodology

11. The consultation on the potential establishment of a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority and the draft Governance Scheme sought views on the proposal from relevant residents, stakeholders and partner organisations. The formal consultation ran from 22 July 2016 and 18 September 2016. In addition to this formal consultation some pre-consultation and early engagement activity was also conducted with a range of stakeholders.
12. Deciding on the best process for gathering feedback from stakeholders when conducting a consultation requires an understanding of the audience and the focus of the consultation. It is also important to have more than one way for stakeholders to feedback on the consultation, to enable engagement with the widest range of the population. In order to ensure the proposed approach was proportionate and appropriate, previous consultations that have had high levels of engagement and those that have focused on governance related issues were considered to inform the approach for the Solent Deal consultation.
13. The agreed approach for this consultation was to use a combination of online and paper questionnaires as the basis, supported by a range of open drop-in sessions, discussion groups, public meetings, a generic email address and social media. It was felt that due to the complexity of the consultation it was important to provide a significant amount of face to face contact with consultees and to provide clarity and answer any questions. The drop-in or roadshow sessions were designed to both increase awareness of the consultation but also to gather feedback directly at a range of locations across the region.
14. To ensure that the consultation questionnaire enabled meaningful engagement with the issues a balance needed to be struck between including enough information without creating something unwieldy and inaccessible. The online questionnaire provided links to the website for further information or directly to the draft Governance Scheme to ensure respondents could easily access all the background information available for the consultation.

15. This approach of open consultation, supported by a wide range of communications ensured that as many people as possible were aware of the issues and could have their say if they chose to. This led to a good level of engagement with the issue without incurring a large cost to limited local authority resources.

Promotion and communication

16. Throughout the consultation, every effort was made to ensure that as many people as possible were aware of the Solent Deal proposals and had every opportunity to have their say.
17. Particular effort was made to communicate the proposals in a clear and easy to understand way. This was achieved by using a clear and informative bespoke website to outline the background to the proposals, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document and by dividing the questionnaire into themed sections which included key information. All of these documents were available at solentdeal.co.uk or in paper copies at libraries and civic offices across the three local authority areas.
18. The approach taken aimed to be as consistent as possible between the three local authority areas while still taking into account local differences.
19. The three councils all had dedicated pages on their respective websites with details of the consultation for the duration. These pages also linked to the dedicated Solent Deal website which provided a range of background information, links to key documents including the Governance Scheme and Governance Review and a link to the consultation questionnaire.
20. For the duration of the consultation information posters, copies of the Draft Governance Scheme and paper versions of the consultation questionnaire were available in libraries and council offices in each of the three local authority areas. Paper copies of the questionnaire or alternative format versions could be obtained on request, either through the Solent Deal email address or via any of the normal contact routes for the three authorities.
21. At the start of the consultation a media briefing was held and during the consultation each authority made media releases about the consultation. A total of eight media releases were produced and details of the Solent Deal consultation were covered (at least once) in the following:
- Aboutmyarea.co.uk
 - Alton Herald
 - BBC Hampshire online
 - BBC Online Hampshire & Isle of Wight
 - BBC Politics Show
 - BBC South Today
 - Blue and Green Today
 - Fareham Herald
 - Island Echo
 - Isle of Wight County Press
 - Isle of Wight Radio
 - On The Wight
 - Romsey Advertiser
 - Southern Daily Echo
 - The News (Portsmouth)
 - Wave FM

22. The Solent Deal consultation was included in nine Portsmouth City Council and 40 Southampton City Council e-alerts. In Southampton the message was included in 12 different e-alert subjects with 18 footers and 22 articles. The total reach of these e-alerts was 224,841. In Portsmouth articles were included in all nine with a total reach of 12,900.
23. With regard to social media all three authorities used their own Facebook and Twitter channels to promote the Solent Deal consultation, in addition a dedicated Solent Deal Facebook page and Twitter profile were created. Portsmouth City Council posted on Facebook about the consultation 18 times which created 2,893 clicks and 699 engagements (likes, shares and comments). Southampton City Council posted on Facebook about the consultation 24 times which created 884 clicks and 499 engagements. Isle of Wight Council posted on Facebook about the consultation 21 times which created 2,739 clicks and 237 engagements. The Isle of Wight tweeted about the Solent Deal consultation 11 times through the consultation, Southampton City Council tweeted 19 times and Portsmouth City Council five times. All of the social media promotions were a mix of original posts or tweets from the individual council account and shares or retweets from the Solent Deal accounts.
24. The Isle of Wight and Southampton also used outdoor advertising to promote the consultation. The Isle of Wight Council used 36 bus stop poster sights across the island between 8 August and 18 September 2016. Southampton City Council used 36 poster sites across the city between 16 August and 13 September 2016.
25. The Isle of Wight Council used 35, 30 second radio adverts on Isle of Wight Radio between 10 – 17 September to promote the consultation. In addition they also used two full page and two quarter advertisements in the Isle of Wight County Press and one full back page advert on the Beacon magazine. There were also two published letters to the editor of the Isle of Wight County Press. Online advertising was also used on the On the Wight website between 7 and 18 September 2016 which resulted in 237 clicks.

Pre-consultation engagement

26. Before launching the full public consultation some early engagement was conducted by the three authorities. This entailed attending meetings and writing letters to a wide range of stakeholders to outline the thinking coming from the review and to share an early draft of the Governance Scheme. The aim of this engagement was to seek feedback and establish if partners and other stakeholders were supportive of this developing to the next step, public consultation.
27. In total the Solent Deal sent 112 letters to organisations and attended 28 meetings during the pre-consultation period. Out of these meetings, twenty were positive about the proposals, five responded neutrally, and for three devolution was discussed as part of a wider meeting and no overall opinion was noted.
28. It was on the basis of these pre-consultation responses and taking into account the comments received that it was agreed by each Cabinet of the authorities that the draft Governance Scheme could be taken out to full public consultation.

Consultation respondents

29. In total, 3,867 engagements with people or organisations contributed to the Solent Deal consultation, the following section provides a breakdown of these responses by each of the available channels of response.

Consultation questionnaire

30. The consultation questionnaire was the main way that feedback was gathered for the Solent Deal consultation. In total 2,531 questionnaires were completed, of which 207 were paper copies and 2,324 were completed online. The total response rate compares favourably with other consultations on the establishment of Mayoral Combined Authorities elsewhere, for example the West Midlands combined authority (with a population over six times that of the Solent) received 1,907 questionnaire responses. Lancashire Combined Authority received 500 less questionnaire responses than the Solent consultation with over double the population. While the Sheffield City region combined authority consultation received 188 more questionnaire responses than the Solent consultation but the population of the Sheffield City Region is three times that of the Solent region.
31. In total the breakdown of where respondents live was even between the three local authority areas, the Isle of Wight had the largest response with 740 (29%), Portsmouth had 725 (29%), Southampton received 716 (28%) responses the remaining 336 (13%) were from residents or stakeholders outside of the three areas. Of the respondents who live outside the area, half work in one of the local authority areas, a fifth visit the area and the remainder cited a different reason for responding. These included:
- Living in Hampshire
 - Owning property in the area
 - Family ties to the area
32. The geographic spread of questionnaire responses are shown in figure 1, which shows a good coverage of the three local authority areas.

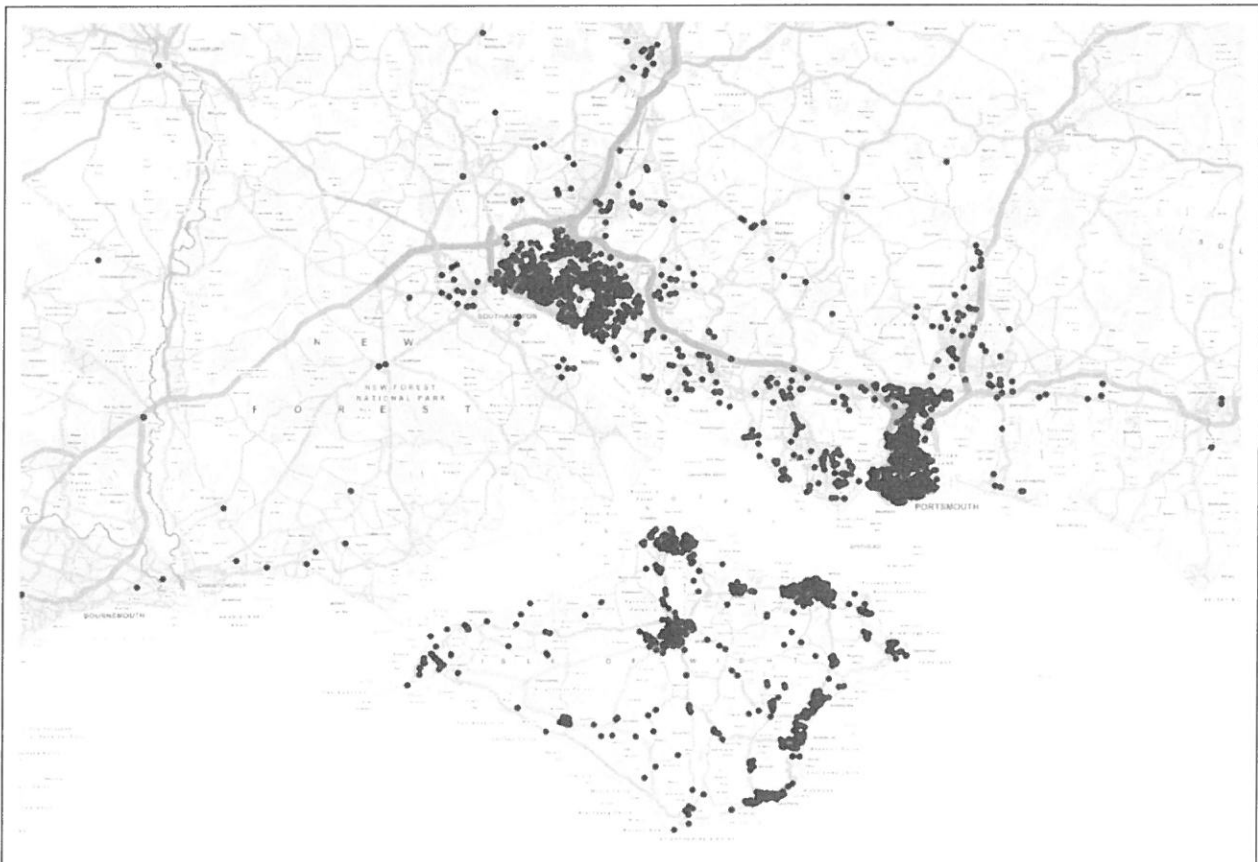
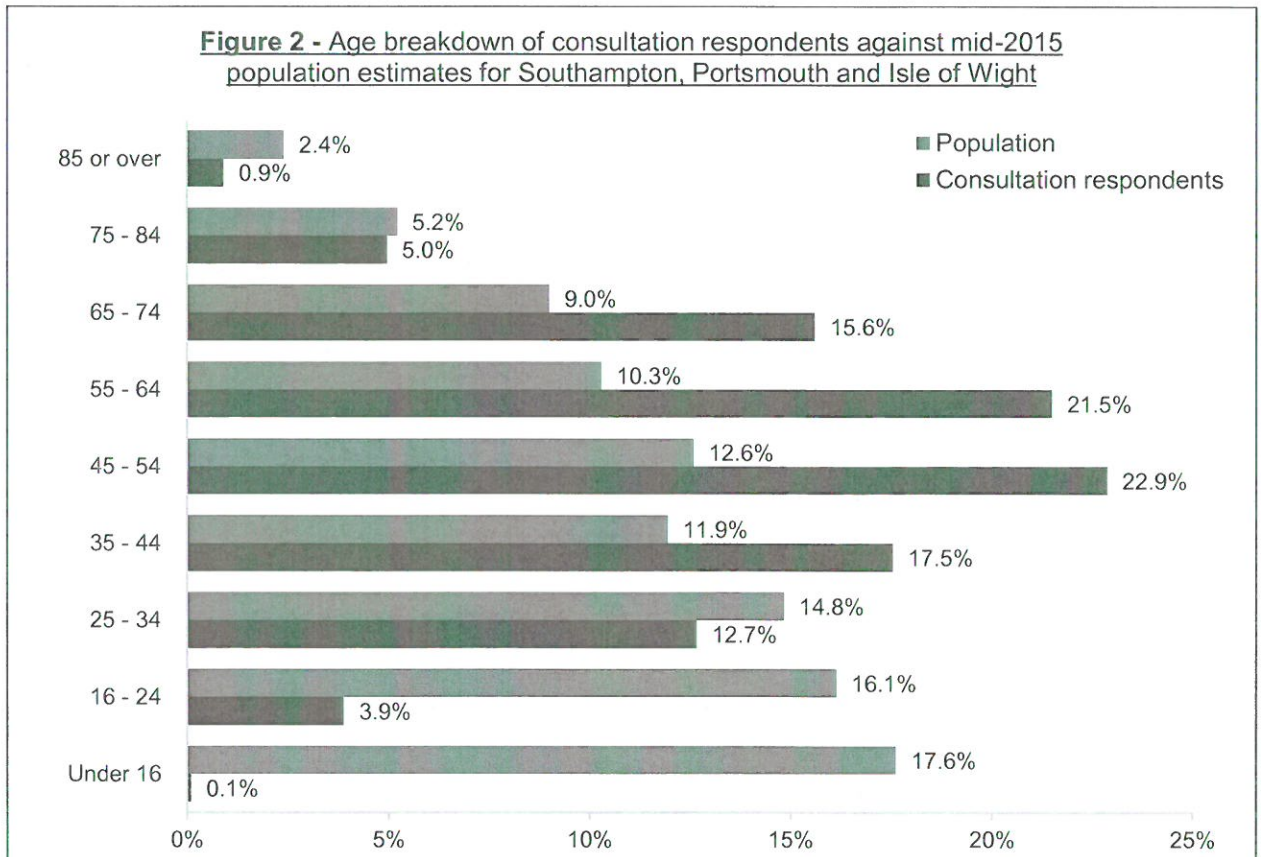


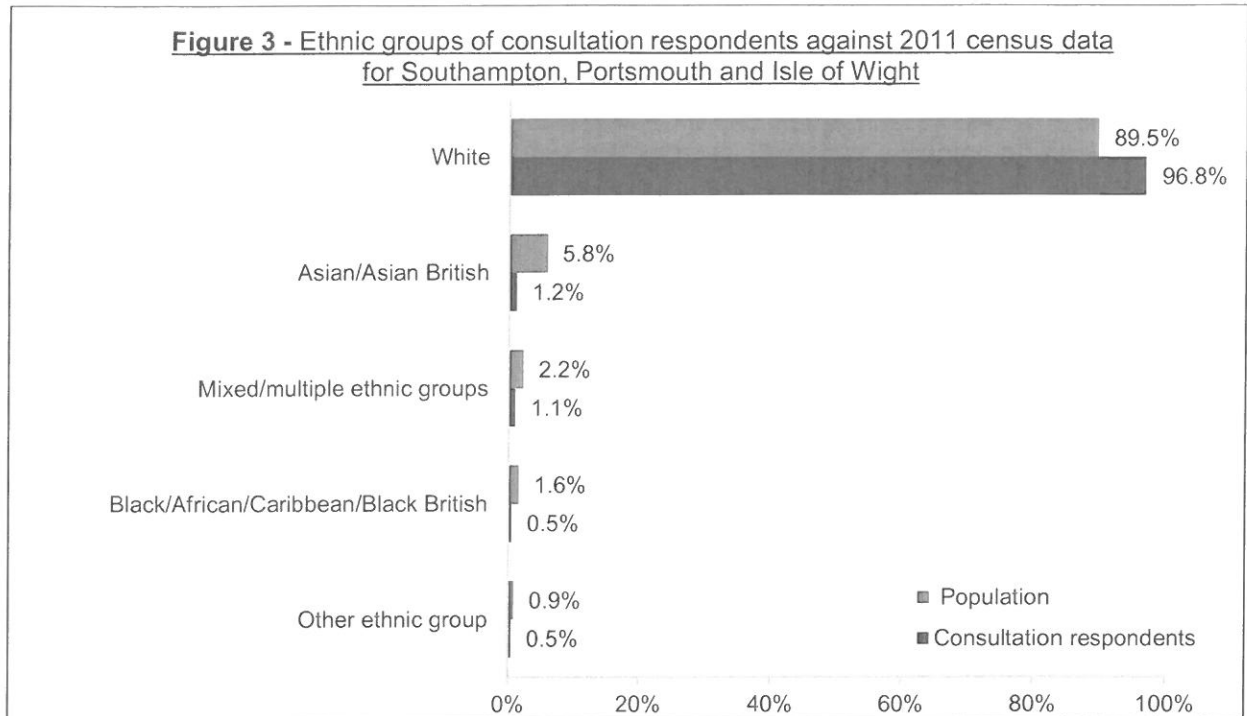
Figure 1 – All consultation respondents

33. The age breakdown of the questionnaire respondents is shown in figure 2, this shows good representation across most of the age brackets, with those under 24 or over 85 being the least represented and the 45-64 age group over the most represented. This is in line with normal expectations of consultation responses as the 45-74 age group tend to participate in greater numbers. As an example, in Southampton City Council's budget consultation for 2014/15, 48% of respondents were between 50-69 years old and 7% for were between the ages of 17 and 29. Both Portsmouth and Southampton have a higher proportion of responses under the age of 34 than the Isle of Wight, other than this the age profile of respondents is consistent across the three areas.



34. The gender breakdown of consultation respondents was 51% male and 44% female. This is unusual as typically consultations receive a greater response from women, two recent Portsmouth consultations both had a majority of female respondents (57% and 54%). Both Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight have even response levels from each gender, Southampton and those living outside the area have a greater proportion of male participants.
35. Out of the 2,531 total main questionnaire responses, 2,509 (99%) were on behalf of individuals and 22 (1%) were on behalf of organisations. Many more organisations responded through the business engagement or via letter.
36. Figure 3 shows consultation responses against the ethnic make-up of the Solent region. This shows that each ethnic group was represented in the results. There is very little difference between the three local authority areas in the breakdown of respondent ethnicity.

Figure 3 - Ethnic groups of consultation respondents against 2011 census data for Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight



37. 9% of all respondents consider themselves to have a disability, which is in line with the level of disability for the city of Southampton at 8.5% (2011 census). This is also a similar level to recent consultations.
38. Of the respondents to the consultation questionnaire 17% work for Portsmouth City Council, Isle of Wight Council, Southampton City Council or Solent LEP. 3% of respondents either work for Hampshire County Council or a district authority within Hampshire and the remaining 80% do not work for any of these organisations. In total 147 responses were from Isle of Wight Council employees, 161 from Portsmouth City Council employees and 132 from Southampton City Council employees. This equates to 5% of all questionnaire responses working for Southampton City Council, and 6% working for Portsmouth City Council and the Isle of Wight council respectively.
39. 66% of the questionnaire respondents were in some form of employment and 23% were retired, 2% were students. This breakdown was consistent across the three areas, although there were fewer responses from students and more from retired individuals on the Isle of Wight.

Drop-ins / road shows

40. In each authority area a range of public events were arranged which involved a staffed information stand in a public place to raise awareness of the Solent Deal consultation, answer questions and note down any comments. In total through these events 842 meaningful conversations took place about the proposals and the consultation.
41. Southampton City Council held three events which were spread across the city, the first was in the WestQuay shopping centre on 8 August and two further events were held in district centres either side of the city. Bitterne Market on 31 August and Shirley Library on 2 September. In total 212 people spoke to the team about the Solent Deal proposal across the three dates.
42. Portsmouth City Council held three events one at the Cascades shopping centre on 13 August, the second at Southsea Library on 30 August and the final one at Lakeside 1000 on 8 September. These

offered an opportunity to speak to a range of residents and stakeholders from different parts of the city. In total 490 people spoke to the team about the Solent Deal proposal across the three events.

43. The Isle of Wight Council held two drop-in sessions the first was on the Esplanade during Cowes Week and the second was in St Thomas Square, Newport. In total 140 people spoke to the team about the Solent Deal proposal across the three events.
44. At these events leaflets with key information and links to the website were handed out and printed copies of the consultation questionnaire, FAQs and copies of the draft Governance Scheme were also available.

Solent Deal email inbox / letters

45. The info@solentdeal.co.uk email address was advertised throughout the consultation as an alternative means of providing feedback. In total 16 emails and pdfs of letters were sent here and have been analysed as a part of the consultation.

Discussion groups / public meetings

46. To support the other channels of consultation there were also some public meetings where questions could be raised and feedback on the proposals given. In total across the three authorities, 96 individuals attended one of these events.
47. Each authority held a public meeting where residents and stakeholders could get answers from their Council Leader. During these events participants could also leave feedback.
48. Portsmouth City Council ran a separate discussion group which members of their residents panel could attend to discuss the proposals in more detail, while Southampton used the same discussion format at the end of the question and answer session.

Comments made through social media and the live Facebook Q and A

49. In addition to the formal and face to face routes for contributing to the consultation, any comments received on social media either through the Solent Deal accounts or any of the three council's accounts have also been included in the consultation. In total 252 individual comments made on social media about the Solent Deal have been analysed, there are no demographic details linked to these comments as they were all anonymised before analysis.
50. During the consultation a live Facebook question and answer session was run to give consultees the opportunity to ask questions of political leaders from all authorities at the same time. This session was promoted through social media and allowed participants the opportunity to ask questions of the Leaders of Portsmouth City Council and the Isle of Wight Council; as well as a Cabinet Member from Southampton City Council. In total 21 individuals took part in the session. Comments made during this session have been included within the analysis of all social media comments.

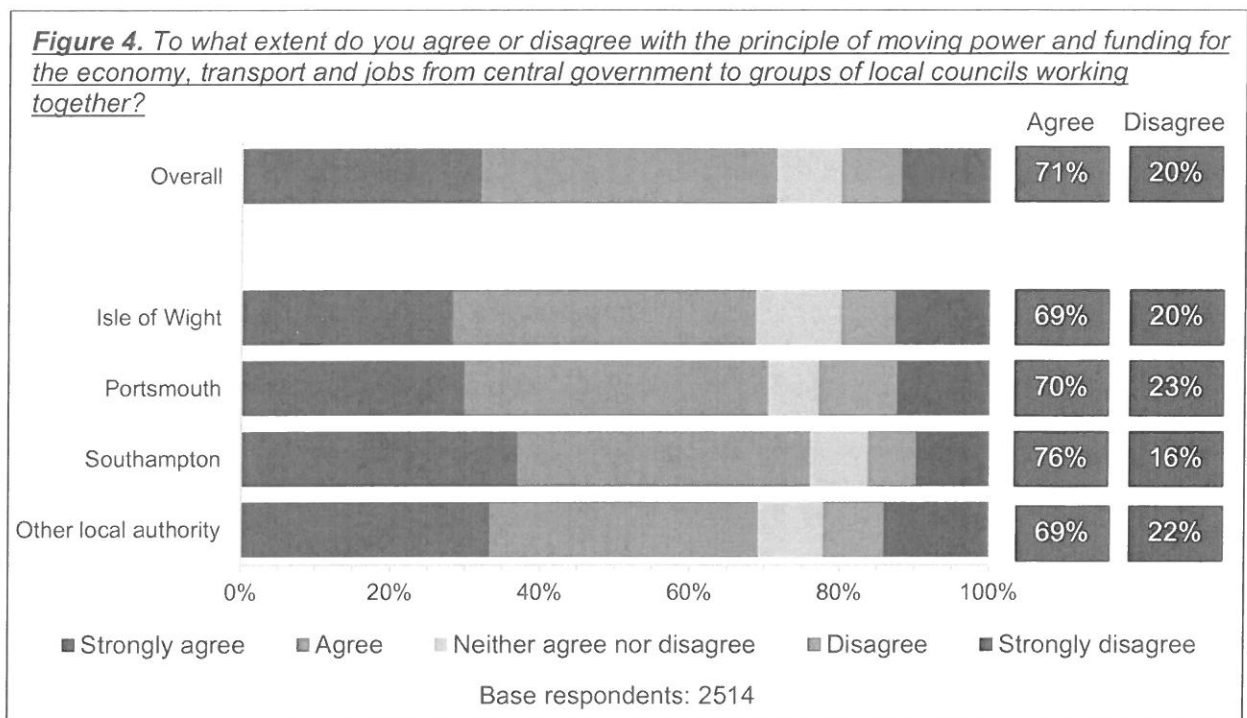
Consultation results

51. In total, 3,867 engagements with people or organisations contributed to the Solent Deal consultation, the following section provides a breakdown of what these responses are saying, the key issues, concerns and suggestions they are making. A variety of channels were employed to gather consultation feedback and the results are reported in sections relating to each of the methods. This approach allows feedback to be viewed within the context of how it was provided, it also prevents double counting or the blurring of themes.

52. Each section will unpick the feedback received and draw the key conclusions while understanding the nuance and detail of the information when looked at from a range of angles. The questionnaire feedback section is the largest as it was the main way information was collected and also allows for the widest range of cross analysis.

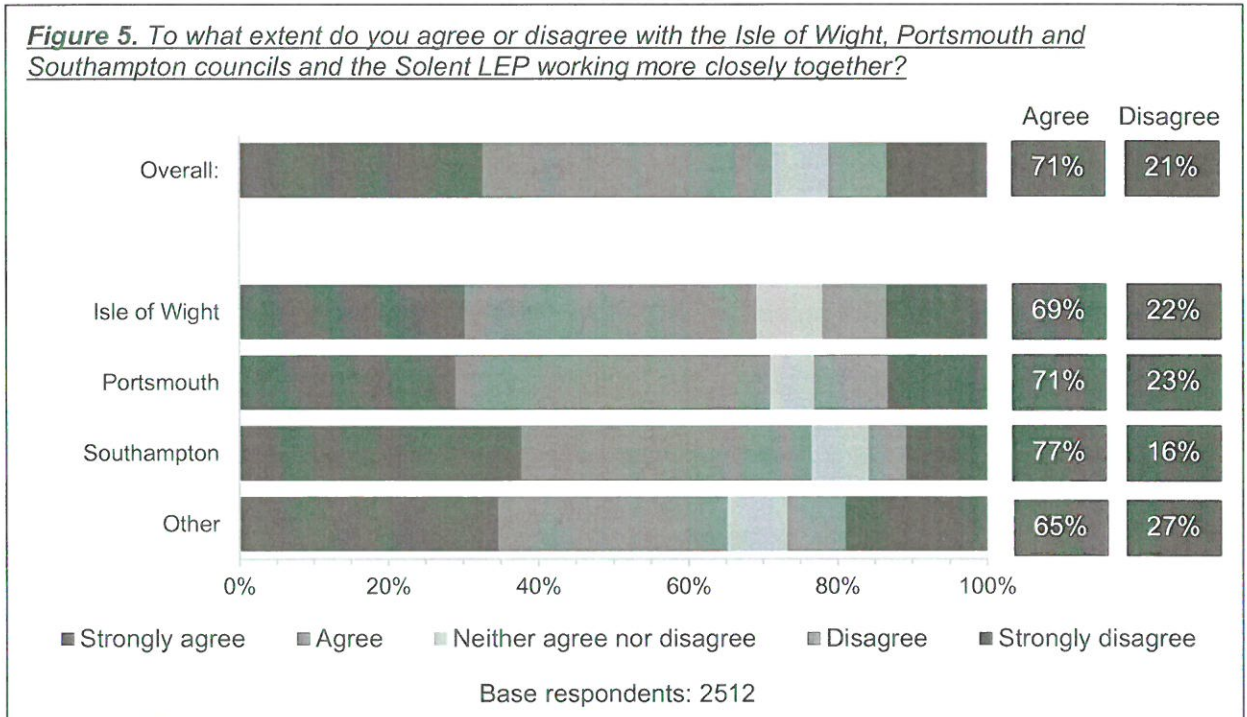
Questionnaire feedback

53. The first question in the consultation questionnaire which sought views on devolution asked about agreement with the principle of moving power and funding from local government to groups of local governments working together. Figure 4 shows the total level of agreement is 71% with 32% of respondents strongly agreeing. Southampton has the highest level of agreement and those who live outside the Solent Deal area have the lowest level of agreement. When the responses are analysed by sub category some patterns emerge. There is a link between age and level of agreement, of the under 34 age group 83% agreed, while the over 65 age group the combined agreement level falls to 66%.

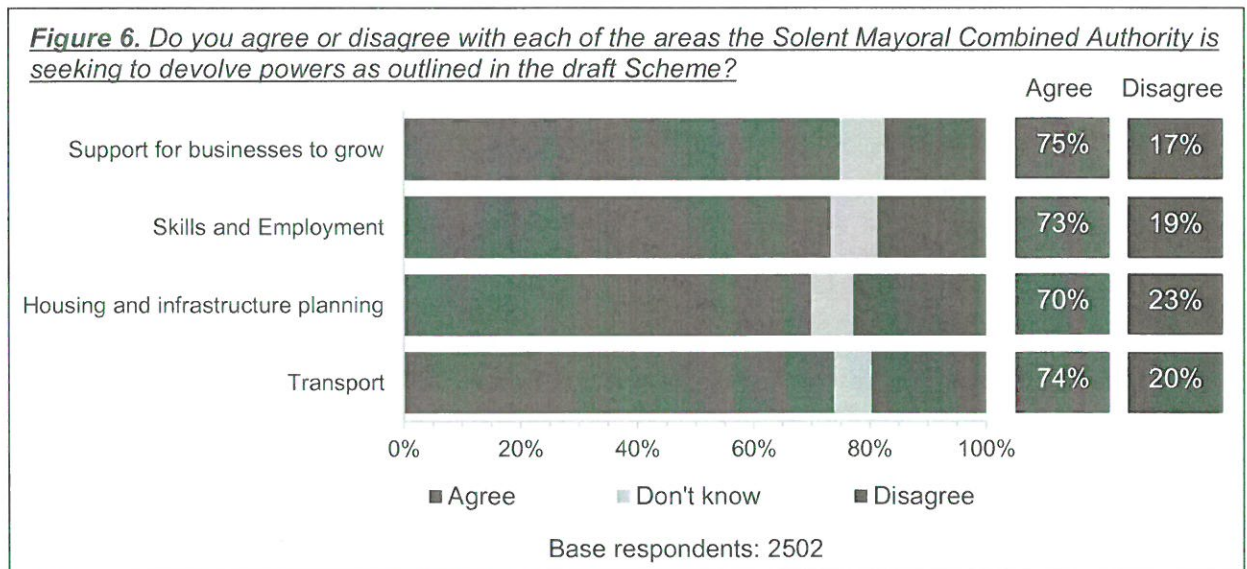


54. When this is broken down by gender, disability or ethnicity there is much less difference between sub groups. The only other division which shows a marked difference is between those employed by a Solent Deal organisation who have a combined agreement level of 85% against 68% for those not employed by these organisations.
55. The next question asked if respondents agreed or disagreed with the principle of the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton councils and the Solent LEP working more closely together. Overall 71% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed, figure 5 shows the break down by area. The pattern is similar to the previous question. There is a link between age and level of agreement, of the under 24 age group 90% agreed, while with the over 75 age group the combined agreement level falls to 65%. The same difference between the location of participants also occurs with the Southampton agreement level at 77%, Portsmouth 71%, Isle of Wight 69% and outside the area 65%.

56. When this is broken down by gender, disability or ethnicity there is much less difference between sub groups. The only other division which shows a marked difference is between those employed by a Solent Deal organisation, who have a combined agreement level of 83% against 69% for those not employed by these organisations.



57. Respondents were also asked for their views on the powers the Solent region wishes to devolve from central government as outlined in the draft Governance Scheme. The four powers that have been outlined in the scheme were listed and consultees could answer to say whether they agreed, disagreed or didn't know in relation to these powers being devolved to the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority. Figure 6 shows the level of agreement with each of the proposed powers for all questionnaire participants.



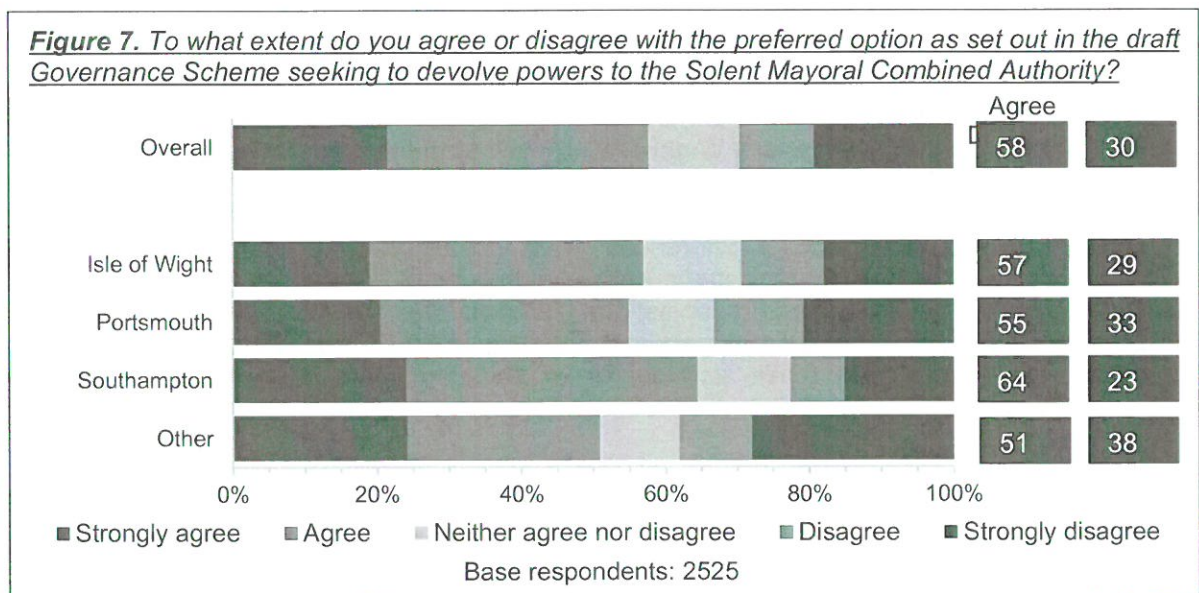
58. The power with the highest level of agreement is 'supporting businesses to grow' and the power with the least is 'housing and infrastructure planning'.
59. In total 75% of questionnaire respondents agree with devolving powers for supporting business to grow in the Solent region, the level of agreement is broadly similar across the three authority areas; Southampton 76%, Isle of Wight 76% and Portsmouth 73%. Similar to the patterns observed with the questions on the principles of devolution and working together, there is a correlation between agreement and age. Agreement with devolving this power with the 16-24 age bracket is 91% compared to 66% for the over 75's. There are no significant differences when looking at gender, disability or ethnicity, however those employed by Solent Deal organisations (Southampton City Council, Portsmouth City Council, Isle of Wight Council and Solent LEP) showed higher levels of agreement (86%) compared to those who are not employed by these organisations (72%).
60. In total 73% of questionnaire respondents agree with devolving powers for skills and employment to the Solent region, the level of agreement is similar across the three authority areas; Southampton 77%, Isle of Wight 75% and Portsmouth 70%. Portsmouth also showed the highest level of disagreement with 22% of respondents disagreeing, compared to 15% and 17% for Southampton and the Isle of Wight respectively. Similar to the patterns observed with the questions on the principles of devolution and working together, there is a correlation between agreement and age. Agreement with devolving this power with the 16-24 age bracket is 83% compared to 65% for the over 75's. There are no significant differences when looking at gender, disability or ethnicity, however those employed by Solent Deal organisations showed higher levels of agreement (84%) compared to those who are not employed by these organisations (71%).
61. In total 70% of questionnaire respondents agree with devolving powers for housing and infrastructure planning to the Solent region, the level of agreement is more differentiated across the three authority areas; Southampton 79%, Portsmouth 68% and Isle of Wight 66%. The Isle of Wight and Portsmouth both have 25% disagreement with devolving this power while this is 15% in Southampton. Similar to the patterns observed with the questions on the principles of devolution and working together, there is a correlation between agreement and age. Agreement with devolving this power with the 16-34 age bracket is 82% compared to 68% for the over 65's. There are no significant differences when looking at gender or disability, however those employed by Solent Deal organisations showed higher levels of agreement (83%) compared to those who are not employed by these organisations (67%) and those from an ethnic minority have a higher level of agreement (83%) than respondents who are white (73%).
62. In total 74% of questionnaire respondents agree with devolving powers for transport to the Solent region, the level of agreement is somewhat similar across the three authority areas; Southampton 80%, Portsmouth 73% and Isle of Wight 72%. Similar to the patterns observed with the questions on the principles of devolution and working together, there is a correlation between agreement and age. Agreement with devolving this power with the 16-24 age bracket is 86% compared to 67% for the over 75's. There are no significant differences when looking at gender or disability, however those employed by Solent Deal organisations showed higher levels of agreement (85%) compared to those who are not employed by these organisations (72%) and those from an ethnic minority have a higher level of agreement (90%) than respondents who are white (77%). There was also a difference by employment status with those working full or part-time more likely to agree (79% and 76% respectively) compared to those who are retired or unemployed (69% and 73% respectively).
63. In addition to the question seeking to establish if consultees agreed or disagreed with the proposed powers there was an open ended question where suggestions for other powers that could be devolved in the future could be made. In total 601 questionnaire respondents suggested future powers that could be devolved to the Solent region, this equates to 24% of all questionnaire responses. Many answers (182) reaffirmed support for one or more of the existing proposed powers, but there were also a range of other areas where consultees felt consideration should be given in the future.

- 64. There were six powers that were each suggested by over 60 individual consultees, in total there were 13 additional powers that were suggested by more than one respondent. Just under one third of those who suggested a power suggested that powers around the provision of health should be devolved this equates to 178 individuals making this suggestion. Those suggesting that health powers are devolved to the Solent are evenly distributed across the region, and are spread out over age groups.
- 65. The second largest suggested power was education, in total 136 individuals suggested this. Those proposing this power did not come from one area or background and were distributed fairly evenly across categories.
- 66. Emergency services (including fire, police, coastguard) was the next largest suggestion with 83 respondents proposing this, next were powers relating to the environment including energy with 70 individual suggestions. Social care for adults or children had the fifth largest number of suggestions with 63 individual proposing it. Table 1 shows the remaining suggestions with 10 or more individuals suggestions but fewer than 60.

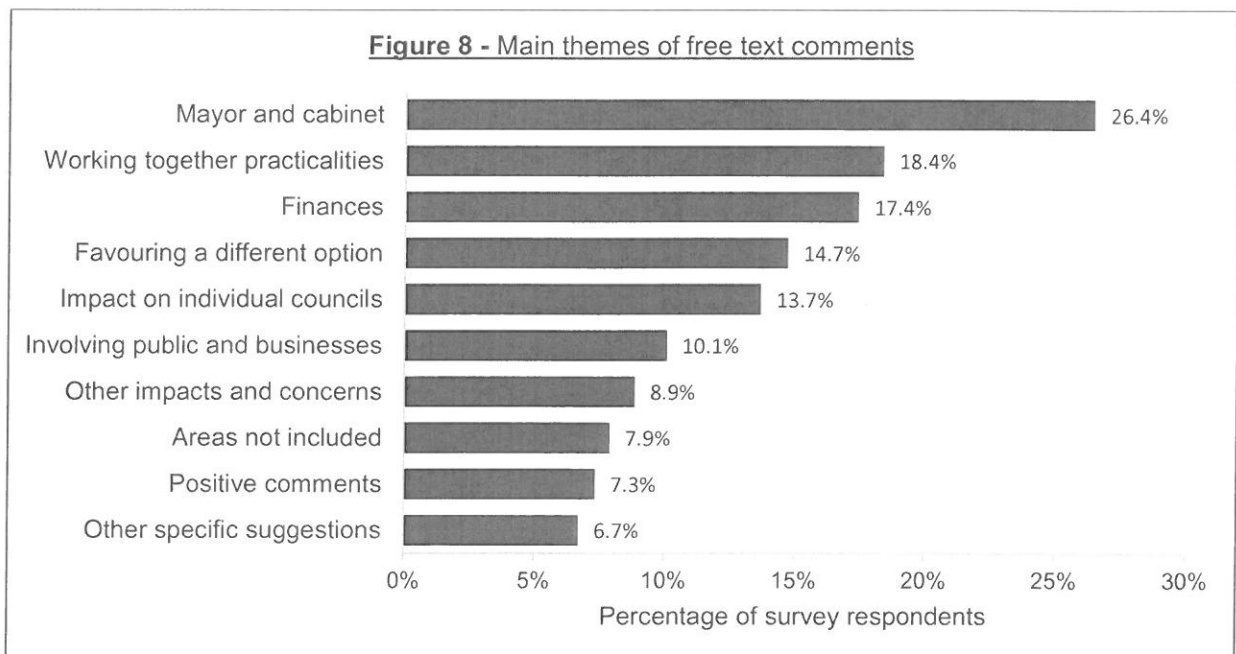
Suggested power	No.
Leisure, culture & tourism	30
Planning	27
Taxation	21
Criminal justice	20
As many powers as possible	12
Waste/ recycling	10

Table 1

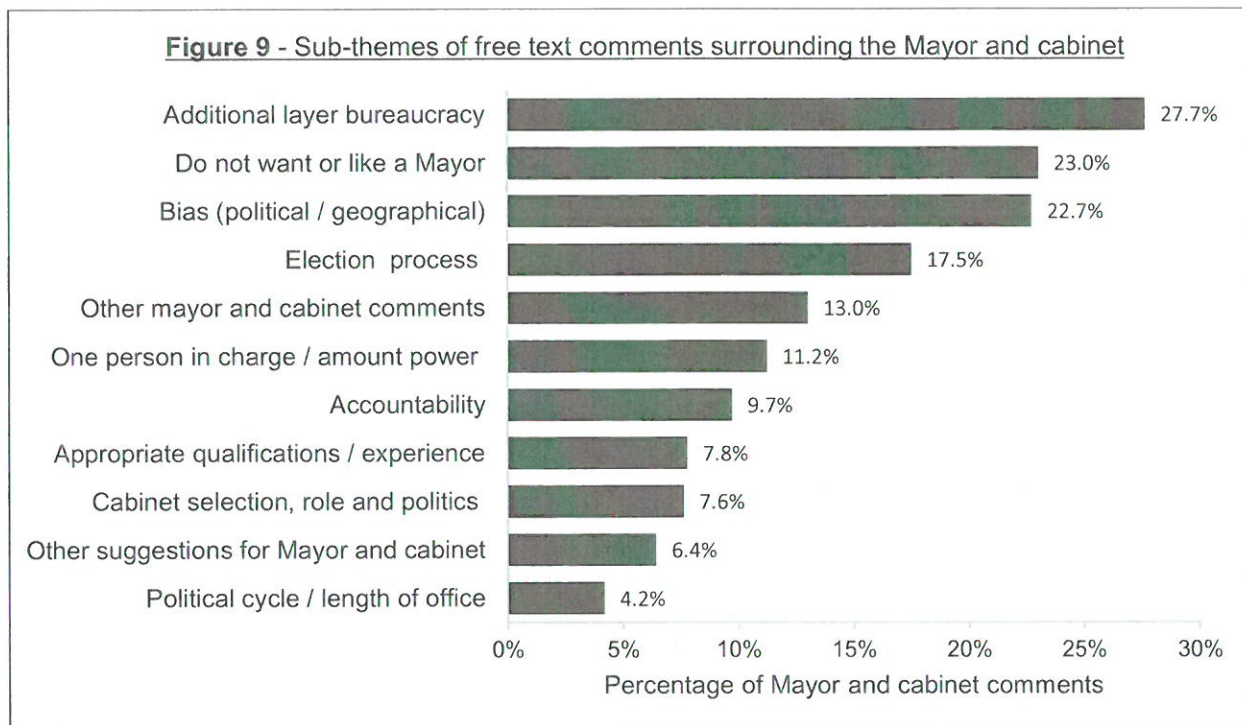
- 67. The key question of the consultation was seeking to establish the level of agreement with the preferred option as set out in the draft Governance Scheme. This was the only mandatory opinion question within the online questionnaire, as it is the central issue for which feedback is being sought. Figure 7 shows that the majority of questionnaire respondents are in agreement with the preferred option to create a Mayoral Combined Authority, with 21% of respondents stating they strongly agree and a further 36% say they agreed.



68. Figure 7 also shows the breakdown of agreement by the local authority areas which shows that the highest level of agreement is in Southampton (64%) and the lowest is Portsmouth (55%) with the Isle of Wight in the middle (57%). Similar to the patterns observed with the questions on the principles of devolution, working together and powers, there is a correlation between agreement and age. Agreement with devolving this power with the 16-24 age bracket is 72% compared to 53% for the over 75's. Women are more likely to agree (63%) than men (58%) as are those who are black, Asian or minority ethnicity (69%) compared to those who are white (61%). Those employed by Solent Deal organisations showed higher levels of agreement (71%) compared to those who are not employed by these organisations (55%).
69. In total 84% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the principle of devolving powers to groups of local governments working together and the principle of Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight councils and the Solent LEP working more closely together, agreed or strongly agreed with the preferred option.
70. There were a number of open ended questions within the questionnaire which enabled consultees to express their views in their own words. In total 1,533 respondents made a comment of some description and a total of 5,128 comments have been analysed. The comments across all six open ended questions have been thematically analysed and drawn together with other comments with a similar content or sentiment. This will be reported back in those themes to outline the feedback. Figure 8 shows a breakdown of the key themes that have arisen through the analysis of the free text comments. Overall the agreement level with the preferred option by those who made a comment was 49% against 71% for those who did not make a comment.



71. The largest individual theme of all the free text comments was the mayor or cabinet with 26% (669) of respondents commenting on it. Of those who commented on the mayor or cabinet only 40% agreed or strongly agreed with the preferred option. Those who commented on the mayor were evenly spread across the three authority areas. Within this key theme a number of sub-themes of comments emerged surrounding the mayor or cabinet. These are shown in figure 9.



72. The largest sub-theme that emerged within the mayor and cabinet theme was made up of comments about how the mayor and cabinet would add a layer of bureaucracy. In total there were 185 comments about this and it was mentioned in 28% of all comments about the mayor and cabinet. Some examples of these comments are below.

'If this goes ahead is there still an argument to have a Southampton Mayor at all. This seems to be adding another layer on top.' - Southampton resident

'I fail to see how another layer of bureaucracy and decision-makers will simplify services for those people who use them or provide cost savings. This is effectively returning to a two-tier system and will inevitably lead to more bureaucrats and employees having to service the machine...' – Resident from outside the proposed Solent Deal area

'The Isle of Wight is unique and combining or joining with mainland authorities will do nothing to develop the Island. The new combined organisation will just create yet another layer of management, councillors and possibly a mayor that will consume valuable financial resources.' – Isle of Wight resident

73. The second largest sub-theme that emerged within the mayor and cabinet theme was made up of comments about the fact respondents do not like the idea of a mayor, in total there were 154 comments about this. Some examples of these comments are below.

'Many electorates have already indicated that they have no appetite for a directly elected mayor so to 'impose' one is completely undemocratic and is to be resisted' – Isle of Wight resident

'I don't like the idea of a 'Mayor'. I think it should be a chair of the committee, otherwise it gets mixed up with the mayors of Portsmouth, Southampton etc. I also think of it as another 'job for the boys.' – Portsmouth resident

74. The third largest sub-theme that emerged within the mayor and cabinet theme was made up of comments about the potential bias (political or geographical) of a mayor or cabinet, in total there were 152 comments about this. Some examples of these comments are below.

'Wouldn't it be better to have an 'independent' mayor to ensure impartiality when called upon to make a casting vote on matters that affect one of the constituent areas?' - Southampton resident

'The mayor or whoever should and would have to be altogether un biased of all three councils...' – Portsmouth resident

75. The fourth largest sub-theme that emerged within the mayor and cabinet theme was made up of comments about the election process of a mayor or cabinet, in total there were 117 comments about this. Some examples of these comments are below.

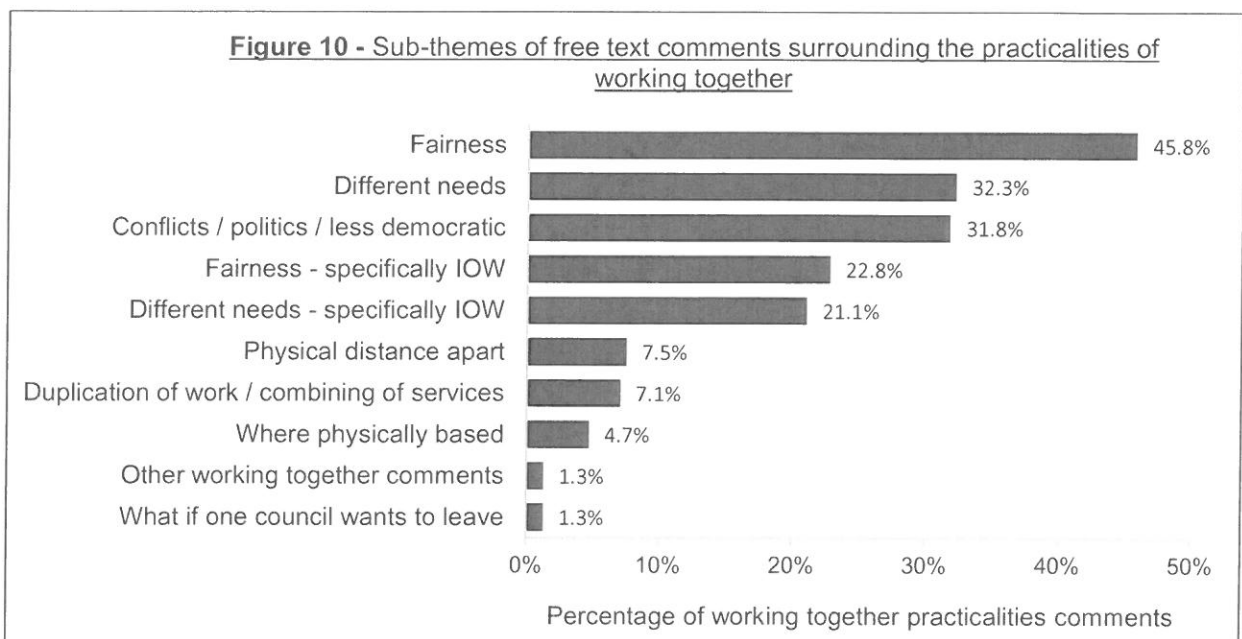
'The election for the Crime Commissioner was handled very poorly with little or no campaigning and scarce information on the candidates, will it be publicised in a better way?' – Portsmouth resident

'Clear proportional representation for each area (S, IOW, P) to ensure that decisions are not 'swayed' by voting in favour of one area over another, particularly given the historical and long established rivalries between S&P.' – Southampton resident

'The mayoral election system needs to be fair and transparent. This should not just be an exercise in parties gaining their figurehead. I agree with the Solent Deal as a whole however the election of the mayor is an important facet which needs to be done correctly.' – Portsmouth resident

76. The other main areas of feedback within the mayor and cabinet included, the experience of the mayor, risks of having one person in charge, comments on terms and election cycles for the mayor, the selection and role of cabinet and comments on accountability.

77. The second largest individual theme of all the free text comments was comments about working together with 18% (465) of respondents commenting on this. Of those who commented on issues with working together only 42% agreed or strongly agreed with the preferred option. Similarly there were a number of sub-themes of comments surrounding the practicalities of working together, see figure 10.



78. The largest sub-theme that emerged within the working together theme by far was made up of comments about fairness. In total there were 213 comments about this and they comprised 46% of all working together comments. Some examples of these comments are below.

'Make sure the Isle of Wight is not disadvantaged in any decision making by its relatively small population size compared to Southampton and Portsmouth.' – Isle of Wight resident

'the mayor needs to fully represent all 3 areas equally, not favour their existing council'– Resident from outside the proposed Solent Deal area

'Recognizing that an elected mayor is necessary, I think the mayor should have as little direct power as possible. I strongly favour the power being placed in the hands of the council-specific cabinet, as this will ensure that each council throughout South Hampshire has a voice. Otherwise, I am afraid the mayor will only cater to areas with the largest number of their voters. I also don't think the Local Enterprise Partnership should have a vote, unless each council gets more than one representative. The voice of businesses in the area should not be equal to the voice of an entire elected council.' – Portsmouth resident

79. The second largest sub-theme that emerged within the working together theme was made up of comments about the different needs of the three areas, in total there were 150 comments about this and it featured in 32% of comments about working together. Some examples of these comments are below.

'What might be good in Southampton and Portsmouth will not work on the island, as we have totally different needs and problems to urban cities.' – Isle of Wight resident

'It will be a disaster - Southampton and Portsmouth residents view each other as enemies. Whoever thought this would be a good idea needs their head read. IOW is a unique venue with its own problems - reliance on tourism rather than any other industry. The three regions are too diverse to combine - local politicians are in favour because it increases their power. They already have too much!' – Portsmouth resident

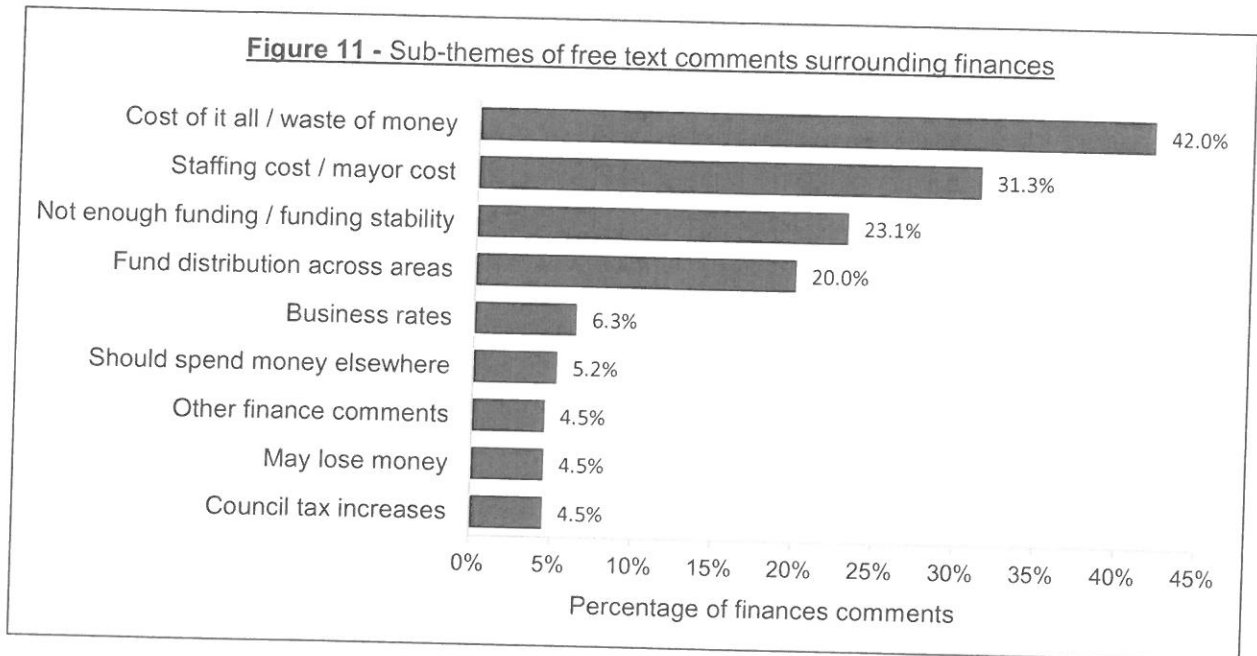
80. The third largest sub-theme that emerged within the working together theme was made up of concerns about conflicts between councils and different political agendas. In total there were 148 comments about this (32% of all comments about working together). Some examples of these comments are below.

'Mayor should not have an ultimate veto over decisions. Mayor should be independent of politics. Scheme of businesses rate pooling to be agreed before the CA is set up. Any financial modelling should take account of Isle of Wight' separation and therefore limited catchment to evaluate impact. The relative importance of each voters vote for the mayor should be the same in each area.' – Isle of Wight resident

'I think it would create unnecessary wrangling to get policy decisions through, taking longer in the process to actually do anything !' – Portsmouth resident

'This is a scheme whereby disparate and socially deprived areas will be fighting for funding and the oversight will be impossible as the local authorities are meeting the needs of communities in different ways and spreading scarce resources with three areas of social deprivation with equity will be impossible and will lead to greater disparity' – Southampton resident

81. The other sub-themes that are also mentioned under the category of working together relate to the Isle of Wight and it not being treated equally or the island being treated unfairly. There were also comments about the physical distance between the areas amongst a few others.
82. The next most popular main themes of comments surrounded finances. In total 17% of survey respondents mentioned finances in a comment they made on the consultation (4441 respondents). The sub-themes are shown in figure 11 below. Overall the level of agreement with the preferred option from respondents who had made a comment about finance was 31%.



83. The largest sub-theme that emerged within the finance theme was made up of comments about overall cost or it being a waste of money, in total there were 185 comments about this and it was recorded in 42% of all comments about finance. Some examples of these comments are below.

'Cost of an extra layer of local government, this will divert funds from the points of delivery.' – Portsmouth resident

'This is a waste of money and will not benefit the Isle of Wight any better than the current arrangement' – Isle of Wight resident

84. Specifically 138 people (31%) commented on the cost of staffing and also the salary of the mayor, this was the second largest sub-theme within finance. Some examples of these comments are below.

'What is the cost of establishing the combined authority? Who will pay e.g the mayor's salary and the cost of their office.' – Southampton resident

'Having more Mayors and other staff members will only use up more public funds, vastly reducing the amount that can be invested into the deal each year' – Portsmouth resident

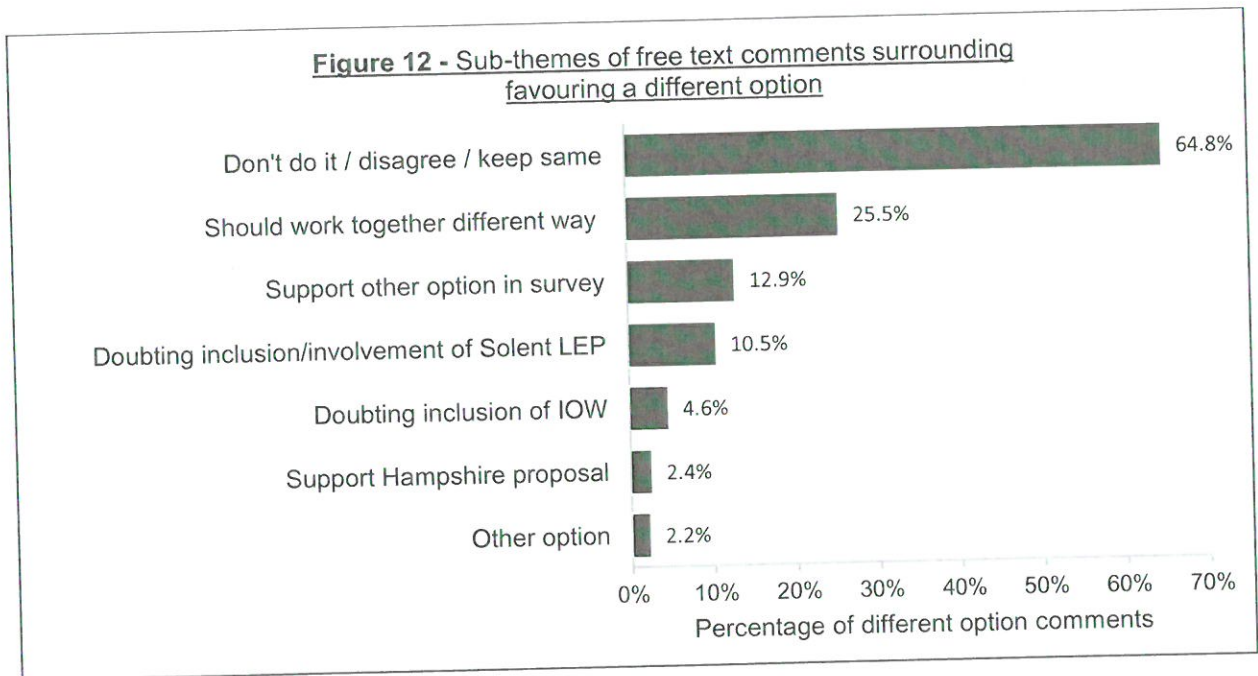
85. The third biggest sub-theme within finance comments mentioned concern over the amount of funding available and the stability of this funding in the future. In total 23% of comments about financing Solent Deal mentioned this.

86. Linking the main theme of working together, the way in which funds would be distributed across the three local authorities was a concern to 88 people. This was the fourth biggest sub-theme. Some examples are below.

'Careful assurances would need to be in place to ensure that the regions got fair distribution of investment rather than creating a centre of gravity around the existing larger body that is Southampton to the detriment of other areas.' – Portsmouth resident

'There will be too much competition within the set up as 3 authorities are all vying for a relatively small pot of money' – Southampton resident

87. The other sub-themes that are also mentioned under the category of finance relate to not enough funding, stability of funding and spending the money elsewhere amongst a few others. There were also comments about council tax increases and business rates.
88. In total 372 (15%) survey respondents made a comment that they support a different option or way of working to the one proposed. This was the fourth most significant main theme of comments. These different options or ways of working are shown in figure 12.



89. By far the most significant sub-theme was not to create the Solent Mayoral combined authority at all which consisted of 65% (241) of the 372 respondents. Some examples are below.

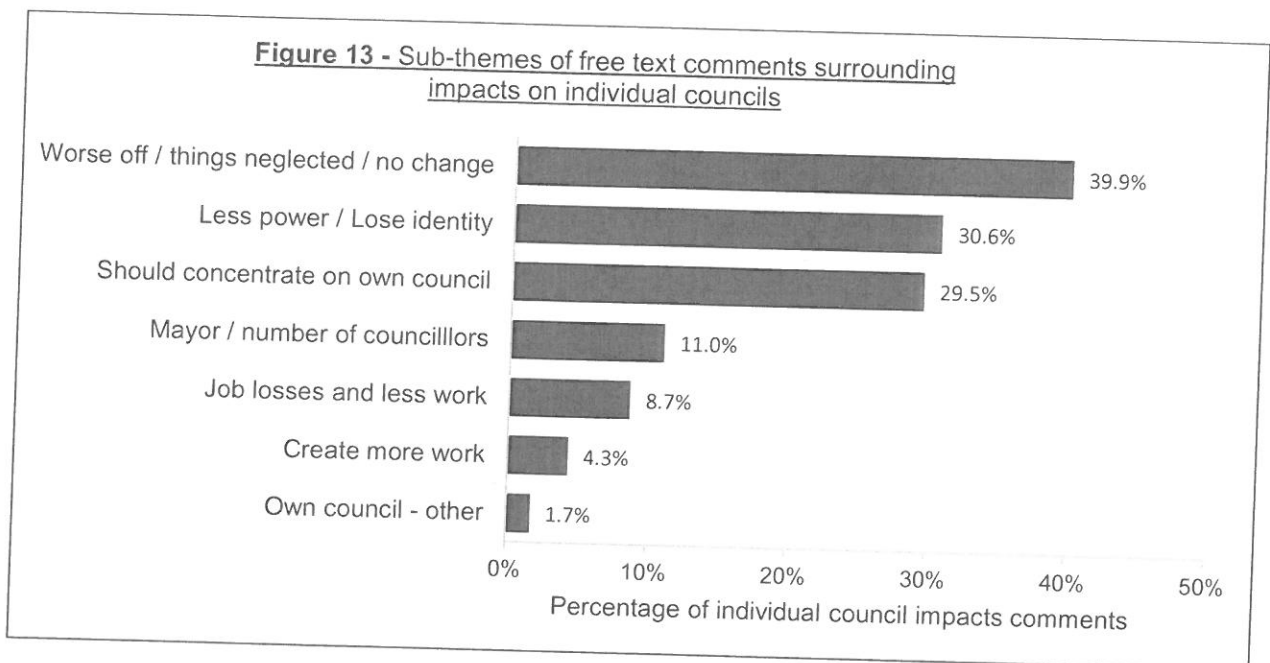
'Yes - Don't do it. Suggest instead that the government makes the funds available either directly to the local authority, or in the form of centrally administered grants.' – Isle of Wight resident

'We don't want it' – Portsmouth resident

90. In the second most stated sub-theme 95 people made a suggestion to work together in a different way. This included a range of suggestions such as creating a super authority, working closer with the already established county council or forming a regional government. For example, see the quote below.

'Super unitary authority, get rid of local councils, ability to have centralised services instead of ones that break down over council borders, a better accountability and a single level of local government. None of which can be achieved with the Solent Mayoral Combined. Likely be able to save the £30 million a year through abolishing local councils and associated staff.' - Respondent living outside the Solent area

91. The other sub-themes that are also mentioned under the category of supporting an alternative option relate to supporting a different option in questionnaire, uncertainty in the inclusion of the LEP and uncertainty about the inclusion of the Isle of Wight.
92. The main theme with the fifth largest number of comments was about the impacts on the individual councils included within the proposed combined authority. In total 346 (14%) people mentioned this, see Figure 13 for details.



93. There are two key sub-themes within the impacts on the individual councils theme, which are that they would end up worse off as a result or that nothing would change (40%, 138 comments) and that there was a risk that the individual councils could lose power and identity (31%, 106 comments). Some examples are below.

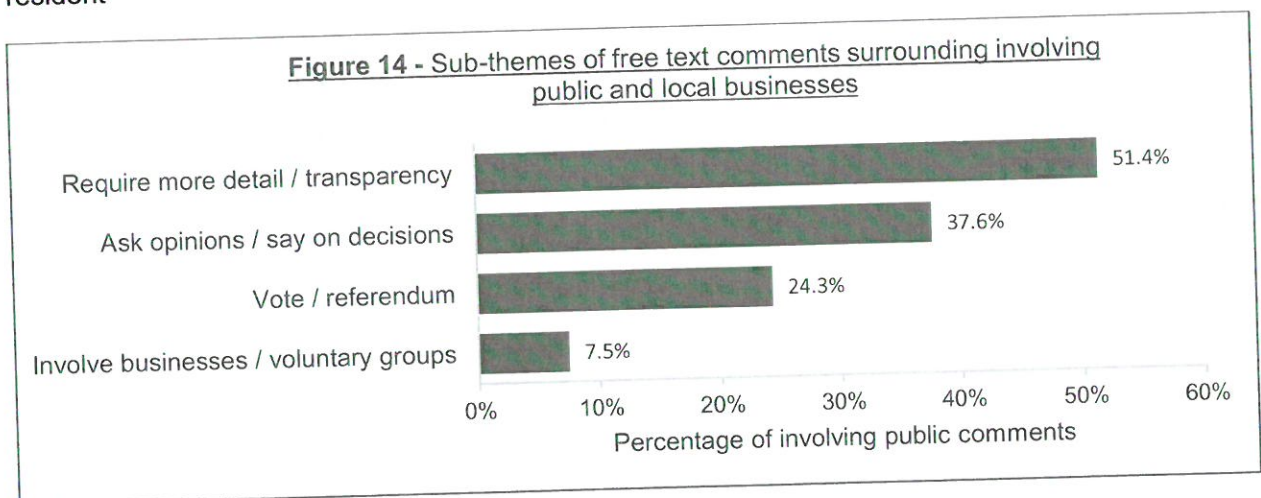
'Governance would be too remote. each area has its distinct /individual identity which creates a loyalty and sense of belonging .I believe it would increase the gap between those empowered to make decisions and individuals affected, resulting in a sense of helplessness and unwillingness to take responsibility and or engage with consultations.' – Southampton resident

'Loss of identity for England's largest offshore island. While areas like Scotland, Wales and even Cornwall are encouraged to embrace their individuality the IW is considering teaming up with 2 authorities which preside over huge conurbations with very different social issues and considerations. While the economic mode and constitutional status is of course every different it is hard not to look at nearby islands like Jersey and Guernsey (a this and a quarter the size of the IW respectively) and see both pushing for greater independence under their island authorities. The IW has nothing in common with Hampshire, Portsmouth or Southampton - or any mainland area. What might seem like a route to prosperity will see the IW as a junior partner in a body which will have no understanding of the unique issues and conditions which exist on this island.' – Isle of Wight resident

- 94. Another significant sub-theme within the impact on the individual was a concern that council should concentrate on improving the services they already control. 102 (30%) of people mentioned something around this within their comment on this main theme.
- 95. The other sub-themes within the impacts on own council theme related to, number of councillors, job losses and the creation of more work.
- 96. Comments relating to greater involvement of the public and local businesses in decisions made surrounding the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority was commented on by 255 (10%) respondents to the consultation. This made it the sixth largest theme. Figure 14 provides a breakdown of the sub themes. Most importantly people felt that they would like greater transparency and to be kept well informed. Being asked their opinions as part of a decision making process or being given the opportunity to vote were also popular sub-themes of responses concerning the involvement of the public and local businesses. Some examples are below.

'More focus should be on public debates and community engagement. Community consultation should be a major part of the proposals.' – Southampton resident

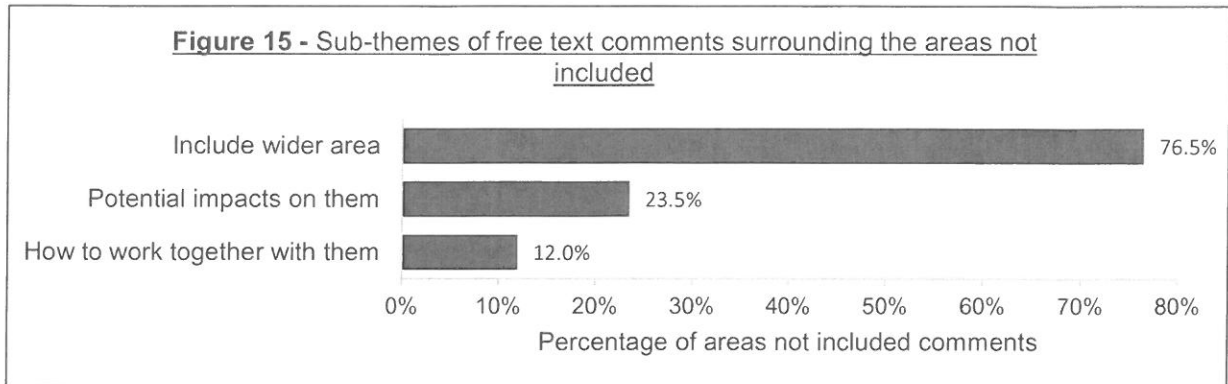
'Everything must be transparent and open to any member of the public's scrutiny' – Isle of Wight resident



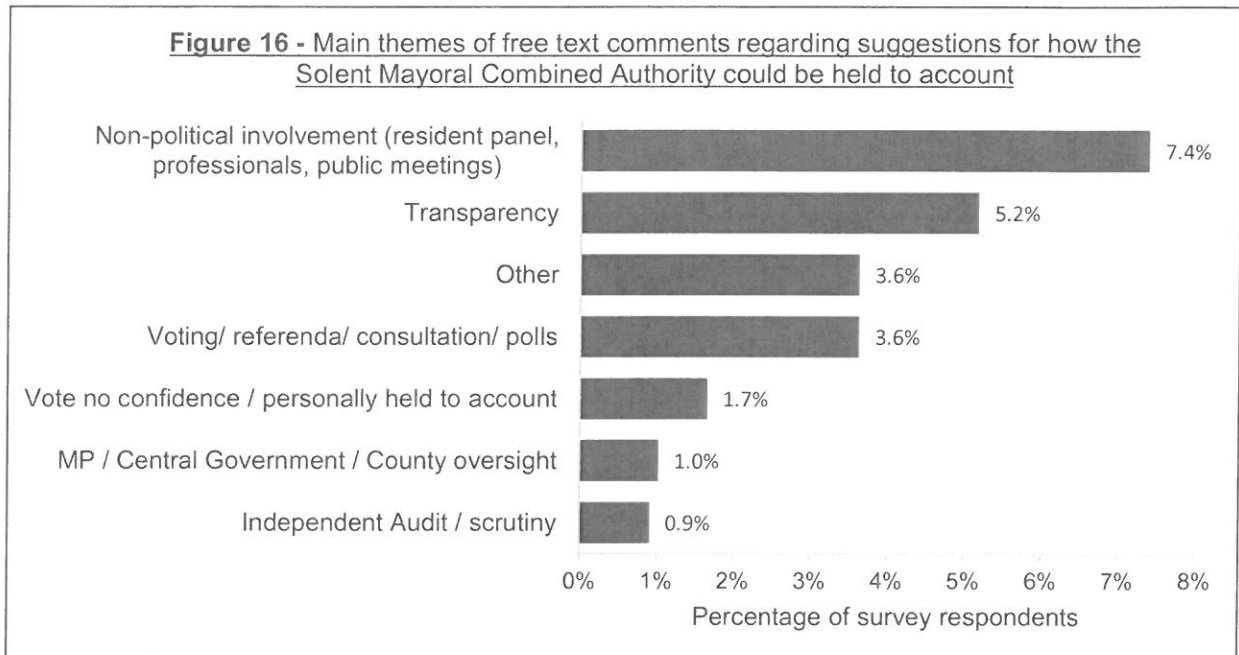
- 97. The seventh largest main theme of comments surrounded those local authorities currently outside of the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority. Of the 200 people that commented on this, the majority (77%) suggested that additional areas should be included or questioned as to why some neighbouring areas were not already included. Additionally, 47 (24%) people expressed a concern that the areas not included would be adversely impacted as a result and a further 24 (12%) expressed concern on how the combined authority could work effectively with other authorities. Figure 15 provides a full break down. Some example quotes are below.

'the inclusion of the neighbouring councils that make up the greater solent urban region, Fareham, Gosport, Havant and Eastleigh without them we can no for example have a joined up transport strategy' – Portsmouth resident

'If it's called solent, it should include all areas that bound the solent, so include Fareham, Gosport and Eastleigh. How can you have a joined up transport plan for two cities where you can't control what happens between them?' – Respondent from outside the Solent area



98. Consultees were given the opportunity to make suggestions about way that the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority could be held to account, in total 532 individuals made suggestions. These suggestions broadly fitted into six categories as shown in figure 16.



99. The largest group of suggestions (7% survey respondents) was around professional involvement, non-political involvement or residents panels. Some examples of these suggestions are below.

'The committee should involve more than just councillors - i.e. include relevant professionals.' – Portsmouth resident

'The committee MUST include a representative number of lay members of the public.' – Isle of Wight resident

'potential for scrutiny by appointed specialists and officers. Peoples Parliaments and focus groups to feed in to the process' – Portsmouth resident

100. The second largest group of suggestions was around transparency which was suggested by 5% of survey respondents. Some examples of these suggestions are below.

'Publish all voting taken by cabinet members within one week of the vote. Set up a small unit of researcher analysts as part of the authority (eg eight analysts plus manager and deputy manager) to support the cabinet with evidence on where and how to spend the authority's money for maximum effect. Publish all of the unit's reports so that the authority's actions can be seen to be based on evidence and due consideration. All Cabinet meetings are to be open to the public and advertised one week in advance unless there are matters of exceptional commercial sensitivity. Proactively publish online all information (eg data, spreadsheets, letters, memos, reports and meeting minutes) that would be publishable under the Freedom of Information Act. Implement a public recall mechanism for officials in all positions on the cabinet' – Portsmouth resident

'Just be honest and open with the public about your intentions by publishing them on an easily accessible platform so there should be less need to hold people accountable when they screw over the little person.' – Southampton resident

'Transparency towards the general public is also crucial - how would we ordinary citizens be able to scrutinize what's being done in our name? Obviously, consultation on every issue would be impossible, but some key issues might prove controversial and require public consent.' – Southampton resident

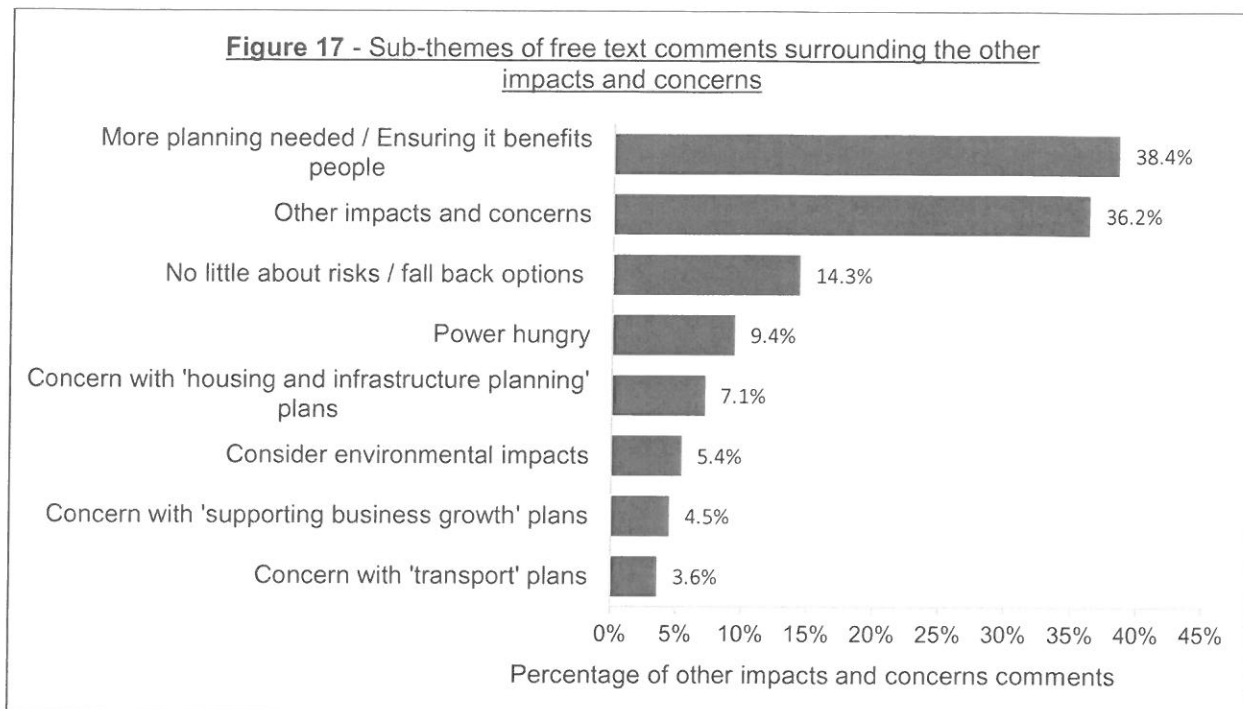
101. The third largest group of suggestions was around voting, referenda, consultation and polls. Some examples of these suggestions are below.

'i think there is a gap of how community voices are heard, through networks i am involved with there is so much agency and passion to make our cities better, if there are voices for these to be heard that would be great. also I think there are so many new ways of consulting and asking for opinion and ideas beyond committee meetings and minutes, there is opportunity for innovative consultation and engagement beyond often tired old paths, this potentially can be an opportunity for fresh ways of engagement beyond the usual suspects and processes' – Southampton resident

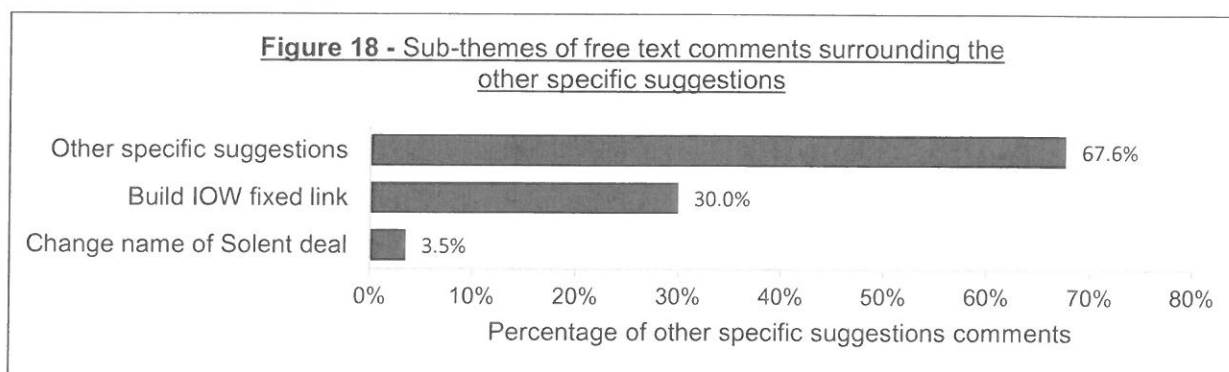
'A formal consultation of those affected (i.e. citizens) through a referendum or vote, once all of the specific details and advantages/disadvantages are made clear. Simply chasing funding for the sake of funding could have some severe future repercussions.' – Portsmouth resident

'Difficult, inevitably local politics will influence decisions. More public involvement and election/ referendum on key issues?' – Isle of Wight resident

102. This gives a summary of the main groups of suggestions, other ideas included; votes of no confidence, MP involvement and independent audit.
103. There were also a number of impacts, concerns and suggestions made by respondents which did not fit into the broader main themes. Figures 17 and 18 show some of the more common sub-themes of comments within other impacts, concerns and suggestions.



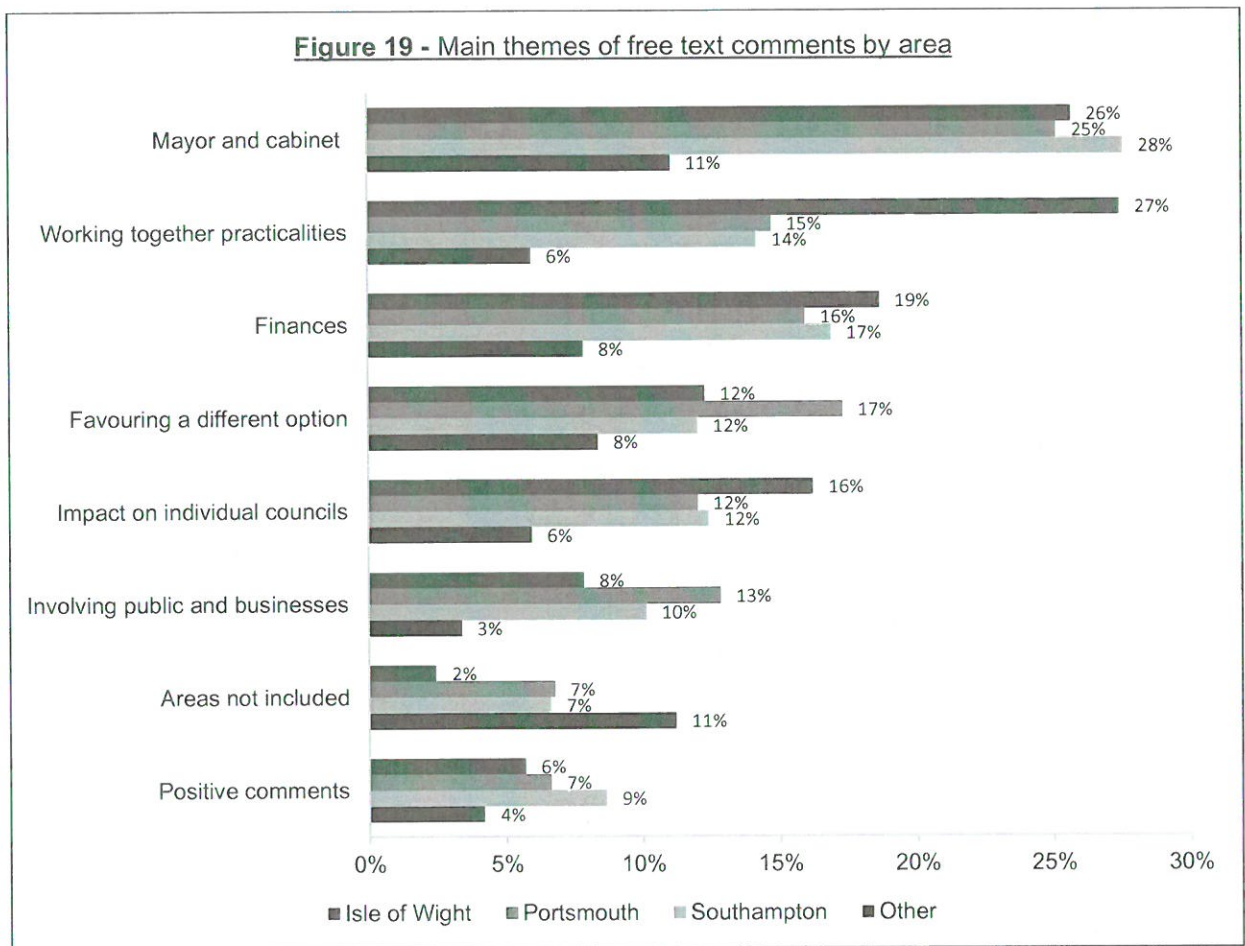
104. In total 224 people had an additional impact or concern that did not fit within the main themes. 86 people (38% of other) expressed a concern about the amount of planning that has been undertaken regarding the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority and to make sure that it benefits people once formed. Along a similar theme, 32 people also stated they knew little about the risks or fall-back options if things were to go wrong. Additionally there were comments associated with current councils being 'power hungry' and also more specific concerns around plans within the proposed scheme.



105. In total 170 people (7% of survey respondents) provided a suggestion surrounding the way in which the Solent Mayoral Combined Authority should be run or things that should be done. Many of these were too specific to group together but a more prominent suggestion was the idea of a fixed link between the Isle of Wight and the mainland. In total 51 people specifically mentioned a fixed link, of which 47 were from residents on the Isle of Wight.
106. The degree to which respondents commented on themes varied in some cases depending on where they lived. Figure 19 shows the main themes of comments by area. In most main themes respondents living within the proposed area commented more often than those living in other local authorities. People living outside of the area however commented much more often on the impacts of areas not

included within the combined authority with 11% commenting on this compared to 7% of Southampton and Portsmouth residents and 2% of Isle of Wight residents.

- 107. Other noticeable differences between local authorities was surrounding comments about working together. 27% of Isle of Wight residents commented on the practicalities of working together which was significantly more than Portsmouth (15%), Southampton (14%) and other (6%). This was the most popular theme of comment for Isle of Wight residents. The Isle of Wight residents were also more concerned about the impact on themselves than either Portsmouth, Southampton or other residents.
- 108. Portsmouth residents commented more often than other local authorities that they favoured a different option or way of working and also that they would like a greater involvement of the public and businesses. Southampton had slightly more residents commenting positively on the proposal than residents of the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and other areas.



109. Consultation should also give participants the opportunity to raise any potential impacts that the proposals may have so that these can be considered as a part of the decision making process.

110. During the consultation a range of risks or impacts were identified through the questionnaire, the main themes that have emerged are; that the proposal will not be equitable to each area, the mayor will not be accountable and that ultimately it will result in less funding.

'The greatest threat would be if a mayor, or the authority paid particular attention to one city, or neglected another (or isle of white)' – Southampton resident

'I would worry that IoW would be under represented as it is so much smaller than the other two areas. Will their representatives really be heard, and would IoW get the best deals for their own communities? As an example, IoW inland transport links could do with massive investment. They've been left behind in comparison with S'ton & P'mouth; would this new body deal with issues like this REALLY impartially?' – Portsmouth resident

'The coastline and the region is vulnerable to flooding now and will be become worst with climate change and this may have major impacts on the infrastructure in the Solent. The environment around the Solent is very pleasant, but needs to be maintained and maybe improved.' - Southampton resident

'any job losses - would some departments be joined together' – Resident from outside the Solent region

'Just bit worried to sidelined cities would see us as affluent and we are not!' – Isle of Wight resident

111. Although a range of impacts that the proposed Solent Mayoral Combined Authority may have were suggested, none identified a specific minority group. Most of the impacts identified were more general or were in relation to the concept of devolution as a whole rather than the Solent proposal in particular.

Letters and emails

112. A range of letters and emails from individuals and organisation were received during the consultation period which have been analysed, in total 16 letters and emails have been included in the consultation. These fall broadly into two categories those in favour and those who are taking issue with the process or proposal.
113. Popular themes of those in favour of the proposals focused around the benefits a deal could bring including the benefits of working together, by having a Mayor and by securing additional funding for the area. Some examples of quotes from those in favour, including suggestions for any proposals going forward, are below:

'The history of collaborative working in the Solent area, via PUSH and the LEP, provides effective foundations for these arrangements'. – University within the area

'In principle, I welcome the 'Solent' initiative. Shared resources usually find savings and greater efficiency.' – Isle of Wight resident

'The wider goals of this deal will benefit our employees and clients in the short term, as well as ensuring future generations of employees are equipped with the education and skills required to meet the future needs of local, national and international businesses that trade in the area'. – Portsmouth based business

'In support of 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'. – Institution covering the South East of England

'We are committed to assist the Isle of Wight Council in any way it can in securing the outcomes identified in this submission and asks to be kept informed of developments'. – Town Council on Isle of Wight.

'The Solent Combined Authority should take a rounded approach to development, including social and environmental goals rather than only focusing on economic growth'. – Institution covering the South East of England.

114. Moreover, popular themes for those who are taking issue with the process or proposal included comments on accountability, geographical coverage, fairness and risks relating to finances, capacity and governance – which included comments on specific clauses within the proposed draft Scheme or specific issues. Some example of quotes from those who either disagree and/or have concerns are below:

'Without the neighbouring authorities of Test Valley, Eastleigh, New Forest and Fareham, the Solent Deal will encounter great difficulty in achieving a strategic approach to business expansion'. – Organisation representing businesses in the area

'There must be strong decision based powers specified for the Elected Mayor that gives benefits to the local authorities. There is little evidence that such benefits can be identified or realised'. – Portsmouth Resident

'The danger is, that as the 'poor relation' we must ensure we get our fair share, and this, used to create a positivity to opportunities for the Island'. – Isle of Wight resident

'Meeting the needs of two cities and of one island is always going to be difficult. Either some decisions will either go unmade or a decision that favours two areas will be passed, whether or not it favours the third'. – Political party on Isle of Wight

'Highway powers are of central importance to any re-arrangement such as is being discussed. Despite this, no highway powers are claimed anywhere in the Scheme'. – Neighbouring Local Authority

'Businesses were clear that support for the proposals to establish a SMCA is provided on the basis that the entity will operate in a simple, cost efficient manner and that additional layers of bureaucracy for business will not be put in place'. – Business community and key stakeholders in area (Via Solent LEP engagement).

'It has been starkly apparent that both the supporting documentation and the discussions have sidestepped the environment in general, and the region's pre-eminent wildlife in particular, and this is of serious concern to us.' – Local charitable trust

115. A few comments also focused on the consultation process itself; they focused on the legality of the consultation, the lack of detail in the supporting information available, timescales which contributed to the assessment of the Deal and the need to hold a local referendum on the matter. Some quotes received on this area have been given below:

'The Solent consultation does not adequately set out the powers that are to be devolved and the mechanisms for their exercise; this makes it impossible for consultees to respond in a way that can influence the outcome on key issues' – Neighbouring Local Authority

'Proposals are not yet in sufficient detail to go ahead. The consultation process is flawed, a referendum, or Constitution Convention with referendum is needed'. – Portsmouth Resident.

Discussion groups / public meetings

116. Both the discussion groups and the public meetings provide useful feedback on participant views towards the Solent Deal proposals. The themes of questions asked by attendees provides an understanding of what participants were thinking in addition to the feedback they left.

117. The themes covered by the public meetings and discussion groups were similar to those covered in the questionnaire feedback. The main issues raised have been drawn out below with some example quotes.

118. The mayor was a prominent theme in all the public meetings, with discussions about; independence, fairness of decisions, bias, how elections would work and accountability.

'Having a Mayor is a risk to the Island as they will probably be from the mainland, and may favour other projects, I would prefer to have a Mayor from a totally different area' – Isle of Wight meeting attendee

119. Another area of discussion was around competition between the areas or challenges arising from the differences between the areas.

'How will Southampton and Portsmouth work together? Traditionally competitive cities.' – Southampton meeting attendee

'The Island has nothing in common with the two cities, the needs of the Islanders are different.' – Isle of Wight meeting attendee

120. Costs of the new authority and other financial concerns were also key topics in each area.

'The government might change their mind over the £30 million.' – Portsmouth meeting attendee

'I am concerned that the money is not enough to make the impact required' – Isle of Wight meeting attendee

121. The groups showed that many participants are positive with concerns, the idea works but have questions or concerns about the detail.

'Agree with economic savings (a net surplus of benefits over cost) in order to make our finances stretch further – but seems to be a focus on forcing through other principles within the same package.' – Southampton meeting attendee

122. There was also a feeling that the proposals lacked vision and needed to really sell the region.

'I get it and I am in favour of it but the document looks like it has been written by accountants, were is the vision and where is the passion, people want to see ambitious leadership' – Southampton meeting attendee

123. These sessions also provided a good opportunity to answer questions and allow political leaders to explain their reasons for being involved and give answers to specific concerns of residents.

Drop-ins / road shows

124. Across the drop-in events feedback was captured by the staff supporting these event noting down key themes emerging in the conversations and specific comments from participants. As previously stated 842 meaningful conversations took place across these events and while a number of these individuals may have gone on to complete a questionnaire, many will have not so it is important to include a summary of the feedback captured through these events.

125. These events allowed for face to face interaction and for questions to be answered, when residents had heard a brief explanation of the Solent Deal proposals most were positive about what they had heard. There were patterns to the questions and comments made at these events, the four main issues were:

- Concerns about working together with other places that are different or competitors
- Comments, suggestions or thoughts on the Mayor
- Cost of the proposed authority
- Positivity about the idea of devolving powers to the local area

126. These comments reflect the issues identified through the survey and while questionnaire responses are often more considered, the broad sentiment is very similar. Many people that were spoken to were positive and many had questions or queries about how any deal would work.

127. As these events had members of council staff speaking with the public there was an inevitable amount to direct feedback on council services, which were recorded but have not been reported here.

Social media

128. All comments received through social media were analysed and coded against the same categories as comments within the questionnaire. Due to the natural brevity of comments made on social media the 14 grouped categories, rather than the more detail sub categories. 92% of all the comments made of social media fell into six categories.

129. The largest category with 26% of the social media comments was impacts or concerns, the comments within this section covered a range of issues including concerns around: house building, roads and parking, cost of the proposal, need for a referendum, governance and that the deal will not have the desired effect. Some examples of these comments are below.

'G.O.S.E was wound up because it was just a talking shop. Millions of pounds were spent in Portsmouth especially on education. It did nothing. Why will this be any different? and isn't this just like the Police Commissioner Office, a vehicle for people to earn lots of money for doing nothing.'

'Too much student accommodation in the city centre. It's got ridiculous!'

'I think we need to see the vision to know what we are signing up for. This proposal will succeed with the right vision, without it, it could do an awful lot of damage.'

'It looks like politicians sit in judgment on other politicians. There should surely be some way to involve the citizens in these scrutiny processes. There will always be suspicions of back scratching if this is done behind closed doors and without external public supervision.'

130. The category with the next largest volume of comments (20% of the social media comments) was specific suggestions, the comments within this section covered a range of issues including suggestions around: a fixed link with the Isle of Wight, more affordable homes and trams/transport. Some examples of these comments are below.

'Fixed link, it will improve the unemployment levels and there will be more competition for employees so wages will rise'

'Go to Holland and see the masters at work!! Trams, decent bus service and everyone rides bikes. This is how we should be going to help reduce pollution ??'

'Try building more council houses and affordable homes for young families would be a great start instead of all the student accommodation, every child deserves a family home'

131. The next category with 10% of the comments made on social media is made up of comments about the consultation process. Some examples of these comments are below:

'Doesn't matter what anyone says the council will do what it wants & has already made up its mind what it is going to do. This survey is just so that they can say they consulted the general public during the consultation period, all this is so they can tick a box & say they followed procedure!!!'

'Why is there limited publicity on the consultation, shouldn't every household should be informed.'

132. Comments expressing concerns about the organisations working together made about 7% of all social media comments. Some examples of these are shown below:

'But with the competition between Portsmouth and Southampton, in many areas, I cannot see how this can work.'

'And in the event the authority would like one particular council or project to benefit the other two have reduced funding for services.'

133. Comments about how the finances would work made 6% of the comments on social media. Some examples of these are below:

'And it just adds another layer of management who have to be paid. Can't really see much benefit there.'

'If the 900 million over 30 year is not indexed link even at 1% inflation compounded it will reach 42% of the original value in the last year. Is it indexed linked?'

134. The final category had the highest number of individual comments (27%) which was categorised as 'other', these mainly included comments on existing council policy or vague sentiments. Some examples of these are below:

'Being able to park outside your own home would be nice, without getting a parking ticket ...'

'Every corner, road, street you can put a parking meter on is not good for the City, greedy council stopping fly-shopping and hurting lots of businesses, used to take the dog for a walk on the common and be able to park for an hour, not now, on top of'

135. Overall the social media comments reflect the key themes of feedback shown through the questionnaire, albeit with a slightly more negative tone.

Business engagement

136. Engaging with and gathering views from a wide range of local businesses is an important part of the whole public consultation process. Much of the pre-consultation engagement activity conducted by the three local authorities was with local businesses. It was agreed that the Solent LEP would lead on engaging with local businesses and gather the feedback they provide.
137. Over the course of the consultation period the Solent LEP engaged with a total of 130 organisations from across the region in a range of ways. Most businesses are supportive of the proposal to create a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority, especially given the focus on economic growth and transport. Many businesses are supportive of the principle and would like to continue to be involved if and when the detail of the proposed deal is being developed.
138. A number of specific benefits in relation to the creation of a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority have been recognised throughout the course of the engagement with businesses, including the following:
- The opportunity for the local area to pilot the new business rate system and feedback into the design of the new national system, including the importance of local tailoring.

- Incentivise Local Authorities to prioritise growth
- Opportunity to take a long-term view of the future as opposed to simply addressing short term public sector funding gaps
- Opportunity presented regarding planning to take a strategic approach, on a joint basis to accelerate growth
- The opportunity a Directly Elected Mayor presents to provide long-term leadership, and create momentum and ambition as a growth ambassador for the area
- Opportunity to increase business and political engagement through the model, including engaging the LEP in the prioritisation of projects
- The benefits to businesses in the devolution of the proposed powers (in particular; business support and innovation, housing and planning, learning skills and employment and transport).

139. In addition to the positive response, a number of areas for consideration have been raised by the business community, including the following:

- Direct LEP representation within the structure is seen as critical
- The importance of business engagement and communication (including promotion of the opportunity to stand as a candidate for the DEM role) will be vital on an ongoing basis
- Need to ensure appropriate management of financial risk across the Solent area - mitigating risk of any future down turn in business rates which may occur and risk relating to any potential resets
- Increasing inward investment, international trade and place based marketing on a Solent basis were flagged as particular priorities for the business community
- Business buy-in would be critical and, in order to achieve this, there should be a focus on transformational projects - whilst not forgetting the importance of SME businesses to the economy
- The need to ensure that processes are simple, efficient and that additional layers of bureaucracy are avoided
- The recognition of the Solent LEP as a functional economic area and importance of other district areas not in the phase 1 geography (particularly in relation to issues such as transport and East-West connectivity which was seen as critical)
- The need to ensure accountability of the Directly Elected Mayor to the business community as well as the electorate
- The challenge of engaging businesses in relation to devolution alongside the focus on BREXIT (noting the potential opportunity to return powers to the local area from the EU rather than Westminster through devolution).
- Need to ensure "infrastructure" is not a limiting term for only transport investment which limits local creativity. Skills was seen as critically important, and the need to target local skills provision, as well as other infrastructure such as digital and energy
- Social Enterprise was highlighted as an important sector and any new system should seek to incentivise wider benefits for the local area
- Incentives should be put in place to business to bring vacant properties back into economic use
- Export support is an area requiring additional investment.

140. The full report on the business engagement conducted by the Solent LEP is included as a part of appendix 4 of this report pack.

Feedback on the consultation process and approach

141. The three local authorities and the Solent LEP are committed to make the whole consultation process as transparent as possible. As a part of this any feedback on the consultation process itself received during the course of the consultation is gathered together here.
142. Overall, out of the 2,531 people who took part in the consultation questionnaire, 60 commented on the consultation process itself, representing 2% of consultation questionnaire responses. These included comments on the whole process, the timing of the consultation, how the consultation was promoted, the questionnaire and the information supporting the consultation.
143. Some of the key areas where feedback was received on the consultation process itself are as follows:
- *That the questionnaire and consultation materials were overly positive towards the deal and only set out one perspective*
 - *That the questionnaire forced response in one way*
 - *That the consultation was rushed and that the timing of the consultation was poorly planned as it was across the summer*
 - *That there was not enough promotion of the consultation*
 - *That one could only respond to the consultation online*
 - *That the consultation ignored the duty under the Equalities Act 2010*
 - *That regardless of the consultation decision makers will do whatever they want.*
144. The following paragraphs respond in turn to each of the main areas of feedback on the consultation process.
145. The information provided was a distillation of what was outlined in full within the draft Governance Scheme, the Scheme itself was widely available. The information outlined the views and position of the authorities and gave respondents the opportunity to give their views in response.
146. The questionnaire was developed to ensure all views could be captured on a range of areas relating to the proposed creation of a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority. All questions that sought to ascertain the level of agreement with a proposal or approach contained a balanced scale. Figure 20 shows an example of this type of question, there are two degrees of agreement, two degrees of disagreement and a neutral centre point. The respondent can also either leave the question blank or select the 'don't know' option. Therefore questions cannot be seen to force consultees in any direction.

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?



Figure 20

147. The consultation ran for over eight weeks and many other areas conducted six week consultations on the creation of a combined authority. The period of consultation also spanned across three calendar months to enable a range of people to respond. The decision making process allows enough time to go to each authorities Full Council for a discussion before the final decision is made at the respective Cabinets.

148. As this report has already shown in paragraph 16 onwards that extensive communications ran for the duration of the consultation through a wide range of channels. This is backed up by the response rate to this consultation being higher than other regions with significantly larger populations.
149. Paper versions of the questionnaire were available in libraries and council offices across the three authority for the duration of the consultation. They were also handed out at the drop-ins and public meetings. In total 207 paper questionnaire were received.
150. Prior to the consultation taking place the three authorities carried out an equalities impact assessment (EIA), section 7 of the main report deals with this issue and Appendix 5 of this pack is the final impact assessment following the consultation process.
151. The consultation is a way of gathering feedback on proposals and that feeds into the democratic decision making process. The fruits of the consultation have been clearly detail in this report, which will go to all the decision makers prior to making that decision.

Conclusion

152. In total 3,867 stakeholders have engaged with the consultation process and given their views on the Solent Deal proposals.
153. The consultation has engaged with a wide range of individuals through a variety of methods to allow residents in across the Solent region to give their views on the proposed creation of a Mayoral Combined Authority.
154. As paragraphs 30-39 of this report have outlined, looking at various demographic breakdowns of the respondents it has shown that while certain groups were less represented than others there was still engagement across the board.
155. This consultation has sought to explore the views of the whole community on a wide range of issues, to elicit a full discussion on the future of the Solent region and how issues may be governed in the future.
156. Overall there was a significant level of engagement with the consultation as a whole. In total there were 2,531 questionnaire responses, including 1,533 respondents who made a comment of some description and a total of 5,128 individual comments have been analysed. The four largest themes that emerged through the analysis of these comments were; Mayor and cabinet, working together practicalities, finances and alternative options.
157. The consultation also gathered views via a range of other channels such as face to face events, public meetings, social media, letters and through business engagement. The themes that emerged from these broadly mirrored the views held by the respondents to the consultation questionnaire.
158. The consultation questionnaire showed that agreement with the principle of moving power and funding from local government to groups of local governments working together was 71% with 32% of respondents strongly agreeing.
159. Consultees were also asked about their agreement with the principle of the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton councils and the Solent LEP working more closely together. Overall 71% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed.

160. The central question of the consultation asked consultees to what extent they agreed with the preferred option to create a Solent Mayoral Combined Authority as set out in the draft Governance Scheme, the total level of agreement with this was 58%. The breakdown of agreement by the local authority areas shows that the highest level of agreement is in Southampton (64%) and the lowest is Portsmouth (55%) with the Isle of Wight is in the middle (57%).
161. The majority of respondents are positive about devolution and the proposed option, the comments and suggestions gathered through the consultation have resulted in a number of revisions to the draft Governance Scheme as outlined in section 5 of the main report.
162. This consultation has ensured compliance with local and government standards. This report, outlines the full picture of the consultation results and will be used to inform decision makers.
163. In conclusion, this consultation allows each Cabinet to understand the views of residents and stakeholders on the proposed Solent Mayoral Combined Authority and the proposed way forward. Therefore it provides a sound base on which to make a decision.

