

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	5 February 2018
Title:	Commission of Inquiry
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval is given for the establishment of a commission of inquiry, as outlined in this report.
- 1.2 That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise and put in place the necessary arrangements for the Commission to be set up and to conduct its work
- 1.3 That the conclusions of the Commission be reported back to an appropriate meeting of Full Council to enable all Members to consider and discuss their work and conclusions.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for the establishment of a Hampshire Commission of Inquiry.
- 2.2 This paper seeks to:
 - Set out the background to the commission, its purpose and aims;
 - Explain the process and outline some of the key themes to be examined;
 - Set out the principles and context which forms the suggested basis for identifying potential commissioners; and
 - Set out the anticipated timescales.

3. Background, Purpose, and Aims

- 3.1 At Full Council on 2 November 2017, the Leader proposed the establishment of an independent cross-party commission, inviting leading experts in environment and economic development and members of the community to

help develop a Vision for Hampshire 2050: Economically Prosperous - Environmentally Sustained.

3.2 The purpose of the Commission is:

'to consider submitted evidence, to deliberate upon key issues and to make recommendations on a Vision for Hampshire 2050 which will guide and contribute to the future prosperity, quality of life, and protection and enhancement of the character and environment of Hampshire.'

3.3 It is suggested that the Commission should consider both the desired future shape of Hampshire in terms of broad outcomes, and to assess the forces that are likely to impact upon and shape that future.

3.4 The remit should include economic, social and environmental outcomes and the key forces that are likely to have significant impact within these themes, such as projected future demography and patterns of working, globalisation, digital revolution and artificial intelligence. Account will also need to be taken of national economic changes in the post Brexit era, housing growth, the impacts of a changing climate and conflicting land management priorities, for example between food production, energy generation, maintaining and enhancing landscape and biodiversity, as well as access to the natural environment.

3.5 The work will help inform and shape the County Council and its partners longer term policies on the future development of the economy, the protection and enhancement of Hampshire's environment, as well as wider planning and delivery of public services. Crucially, this work will link with an emerging Government agenda on Local Industrial Strategies, which are seen as setting a longer term vision for local areas, looking beyond traditional economic considerations and providing a framework for future planning and resourcing. There will be a strong link to the recently published 25 Year Environment Plan '*A Green Future: our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*'; and will link to the current Government focus on housing and infrastructure to inform any potential economic deals for the county. These plans and policies cover a wide range of issues that will need to be explored from a Hampshire perspective throughout the Commission and beyond.

4. Process and Themes for the Commission

4.1 It is suggested that the Commission of inquiry would start with an initial meeting to establish the modus operandi, including consideration of its Terms of Reference, its broad work programme, and the processes involved including the scheduling of a series of up to six evidence gathering hearings.

4.2 A 'Call for Evidence' will also be undertaken. This will be for evidence from both specified invited experts, as well as an open call for evidence from the wider Hampshire community and any independent experts or organisations who may wish to make a submission.

4.3 The evidence gathering part of the process is envisaged to involve a series of up to six hearings, with two to three invited witnesses along with

consideration of relevant material from other submissions. Subject to the agreement of the Commission, it is proposed the evidence gathering would be divided up into cross-cutting, inter-related themes along the following lines:

- (i) **Demographic and societal challenges** - This theme would cover the future demography of Hampshire, the changing population and living patterns, and the opportunities and challenges into the future, for example in terms of health and social care, or housing and employment.
- (ii) **Economy** - This theme would look at the future of the Hampshire economy in the context of Brexit, increasing globalisation and the potential digital and automation revolutions. It would look at the most potentially significant factors influencing business investment and location decisions, including local skills and access to housing.
- (iii) **Work, skills and lifestyle** - This theme would examine future learning and working patterns, skills needs in a post digital revolution future, as well as wider quality of life within Hampshire such as arts, leisure and culture.
- (iv) **Environment and quality of place** - Hampshire's natural environment is arguably its main economic asset. This theme looks at how a changing climate, different patterns of living and working, and competing demands on countryside and farmland will impact on environmental quality, character and quality of life in Hampshire.
- (v) **Mobility, Connectivity and Energy** - This theme includes the transport impact of electric powered and autonomous vehicles, impact of smart technology in homes and workplaces, communications technology, and future energy issues.
- (vi) **Rural Hampshire** - This theme could look at how economic, social, technological and environmental changes are likely to affect rural communities, the potential for a rural renaissance and new opportunities for rural communities.

4.4 It is expected that the evidence will be submitted in advance of the themed based evidence hearing sessions, with evidence packs supplied to Commissioners for the Inquiry hearings. This is likely to be detailed and require some time to gather and digest for both the Commissioners and officers supporting the process.

4.5 Evidence hearings will then be held to discuss the themes. Commissioners will receive an evidence pack in advance of each session. Each hearing will then feature 2 -3 witnesses who would be expected to make a presentation followed by opportunities for Commission members to cross-examine presenters, discuss points with invited experts and advisors and call for any required follow-up information. They will then have time to deliberate on the evidence and debates and to establish emerging key points and any initial conclusions at the end of each hearing. The Commission of inquiry will hold some final sessions to consider the evidence as a whole.

- 4.6 Following the Commission of inquiry evidence gathering and consideration process, it is proposed that a report will be prepared for consideration by Full Council, which will provide the basis for a strategic vision for Hampshire to 2050, with the aim of providing strategic guidance for the future of the County. It will help the County Council to formulate more detailed policies for the future development of the economy, the protection and enhancement of Hampshire's environment, and for the planning and future delivery of public services. It will also provide an opportunity and focus for work with central government and its partners to help to further identify strategic requirements and align funding priorities.
- 4.7 The process for the commission of inquiry will need to involve officers from across the organisation, due to the wide ranging issues to be discussed. This will require dedicated resources to be identified to support the process and ensure its successful delivery.

5. Potential Commissioners

- 5.1 In order to properly explore the themes identified, it is important to have a range of commissioners with different areas of interest and knowledge but also with a connection to Hampshire. The Commission process will require some time to attend hearings and to read evidence packs, therefore it is likely to involve a contribution of between half and one day per month for each Commissioner, for around 12 months. The need to commit time on this basis may also have an impact on who may be able to become potential Commission members.
- 5.2 The Commission will need to have proper and balanced political representation. It is expected to be chaired by the Leader of the County Council, and it is intended to involve a District Council Leader and an Opposition County Councillor, if possible representing different areas across Hampshire.
- 5.3 The Commissioners are not expected to be subject experts, but to bring some knowledge and understanding of Hampshire, and a willingness to work alongside others in considering a wide ranging set of ideas and evidence, and formulating advice for the County Council to consider. Non political Commissioners may therefore come from a range of backgrounds or interests within or related to Hampshire, including academia, business, public services, community and interest groups, and importantly a commissioner drawn from a younger persons cohort such as students.

6. Finance

- 6.1 The Commission is not expected to require significant expenditure in the course of its work, as it will be mainly supported by existing County Council resources. However it is anticipated that some additional funding will be required to support the Commission process, including providing some additional dedicated capacity to support the general work on evidence gathering, and the preparation and running of the Commission's meetings, including potential expenses for invited witnesses. It is proposed that an

operational budget sum of up to £100,000 should be identified from within the overall Invest in Hampshire resource to support the Commission. This will be subject to a separate report to the Executive Member for Policy and Resources who has responsibility for the Invest in Hampshire Programme and Resources.

7. Status of Commission and Commissioners

- 7.1 The Commission is not a formal Committee of the County Council and accordingly any non County Council Member will not be a Co-opted Member of the County Council.

8. Potential Timescales

- 8.1 It is proposed that the initial meeting and 'Call for Evidence' is undertaken in early 2018, with the formal hearings commencing in the Spring. The aim is to complete the evidence hearings during 2018, with consideration of conclusions and completion of a report in Spring 2019, and for that report to be considered by Full Council in July 2019.
- 8.2 It should be noted that this is an ambitious timescale; given the scope of the inquiry, likely interest, and time it will take to examine the evidence. Therefore this timescale will be kept under review as the Commissioners are appointed and throughout the process to ensure it remains appropriate and deliverable. Appendix 1 sets out alternative potential timescales.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 9.1 The proposed Commission of inquiry is an opportunity to engage with a variety of Hampshire stakeholders to develop a vision for the County up to 2050, and the proposal is commended to the Cabinet on this basis.
- 9.2 **It is recommended that:**
- a) That approval is given for the establishment of a commission of inquiry, as outlined in this report.
 - b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to finalise and put in place the necessary arrangements for the Commission to be set up and to conduct its work
 - c) That the conclusions of the Commission be reported back to an appropriate meeting of Full Council to enable all Members to consider and discuss their work and conclusions.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1 The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2 Equalities Impact Assessment:

This report merely seeks approval to establish a Commission of Inquiry and agree its processes. It will not have decision making powers and therefore no direct impact on equality issues. However any recommendations from the Commission would be subject to their own equality impact assessment.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? No impact.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? No impact