

Romsey Town Council

Chief Officer: Helen Klaassen PSLCC

Town Hall
1, Market Place
Romsey
SO51 8YZ



MINUTES of the EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL held on 8th January 2026 at Romsey Town Hall.

In the Chair: Councillor J. Parker

Attendance:

Present:

Councillor C. Burgess
Councillor J. Burnage
Councillor M. Cooper
Councillor I. Culley

Councillor S. Gidley
Councillor N. Gwynne
Councillor J. Critchley
Councillor J. Parker

Councillor R. Theron
Councillor S. Wilkinson

Absent:

Councillor A. Goddard
Councillor C. Birkett
Councillor J. Ray

Councillor R. Kohli
Councillor J. Urquhart

Also in Attendance:

Helen Klaassen – Chief Officer (CO)

Members of the Public:

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TC150 APOLOGIES

None received.

TC151 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

TC152 RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION.

The matter was discussed:

- 1. Hampshire County Council & East Hampshire District Council proposed 4 unitary councils across the whole of the area of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton comprising the current areas of:**
 - **Mid North:** Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire, Hart, Rushmoor, Winchester
 - **West:** Eastleigh, New Forest, Southampton, Test Valley
 - **South East:** Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth
 - **Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight to remain unchanged

It was noted that the size of the unitary did not necessarily have an impact on the performance or success and that HCC's logic in proposing this was that each area would have a city.

Cllrs noted they were not happy being part of Southampton and used the county's logic against them in that mixing different types of areas would not work. In this case the cities would dominate - urban vs rural.

TVBC/NFDC area is parished, Southampton is not and there was doubts over how successful dividing it into parishes would actually be. The unitary division must 'support a system that understands and services parishes', this option does not do that.

Noted that as town council we must remain connected to our residents, it is a concern that in the formation of vast unitary areas, connections with the people they serve will be lost or diluted.

2. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, New Forest District Council and Test Valley Borough Council proposed 5 unitary councils across the whole of the area of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton comprising the current areas of:

- **North:** Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor
- **Mid:** East Hampshire, New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester
- **South East:** Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth
- **South West:** Eastleigh, Southampton
- **Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight to remain unchanged

TVBC preferred option.

Concern that there were two national parks in one unitary area, which would place a development burden on the non-NP areas.

Too big in terms of people, would leave Southampton with only 385k.

Would be restrictive on any expansion for Eastleigh or Southampton.

Land area too large, concern that councillors in the east would have too little knowledge/familiarity with parishes in the west.

3. Eastleigh Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, Hart District Council, Havant Borough Council, Portsmouth City Council, Rushmoor Borough Council and Southampton City Council proposed 5 unitary councils across the whole of the area of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. This includes a request to split some existing district council areas between the proposed new councils. These would comprise the current areas of:

- **North:** Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor
- **Mid:** East Hampshire, New Forest, Test Valley, Winchester, (less 11 parishes from all 4 areas)
- **South East:** Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth, (plus 3 parishes of East Hampshire and 1 parish of Winchester)
- **South West:** Eastleigh, Southampton plus 4 parishes from New Forest and 3 parishes from Test Valley
- **Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight to remain unchanged

Too much chopping about of area, RTC is resistant to moving parishes about and prefers to keep boundaries intact, additionally, too expensive to split and aggregate existing BC/DC parishes, e.g. Waterside. Same disadvantages as option 1.

Concerns with merging somewhere like TVBC with Southampton is the fact that Test Valley has a well-established 100% coverage in parishes, Southampton has no concept of parishes. Which is

part of a larger concern around neighbourhood areas.

4. Winchester City Council proposed 5 unitary councils across the whole of the area of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. These would comprise the current areas of:

- **North:** Basingstoke and Deane, Hart, Rushmoor
- **Mid:** East Hampshire, Test Valley, Winchester
- **South East:** Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Portsmouth
- **South West:** Eastleigh, New Forest, Southampton
- **Isle of Wight:** Isle of Wight to remain unchanged

Preferred option. Still have city, Winchester. Size more equitable, land mass more equitable. All unitary areas still have cities. Demographics for the areas are similar.

No guarantee that IOW won't be included and should be included in Portsmouth as has strong links with them. Noted that no case has been made for the non-inclusion of the IOW.

For inclusion in response;

The problems facing the county will not be overcome with this rearrangement. The costs of Health and social care will not reduce and thus this is a waste of time as it does not address the real issues.

Parishes and Town Councils have been overlooked; they were not included as consultees and should have been. The government clearly does not understand how Town and Parish Councils work and should do more to support them.

Options and Vote:

1. **Hampshire County Council & East Hampshire District Council preferred option** – No proposer.
2. **Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, New Forest District Council and Test Valley Borough Council preferred option** – No proposer.
3. **Eastleigh Borough Council, Fareham Borough Council, Hart District Council, Havant Borough Council, Portsmouth City Council, Rushmoor Borough Council and Southampton City Council preferred option** – No proposer.
4. **Winchester City Council preferred option** – Cllr Parker **PROPOSED**, Cllr Theron **SECONDED** and it was **RESOLVED** that the council recommended this option and that the Chief Officer should formulate a response to the consultation.

The meeting concluded at 7.22pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____