Consultation on a Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Redacted of personal data

Appendix 6

Extensive Comments from paper responses

Prepared by:
Nicole Peppard
Business & Performance Officer
Business Support Performance & Training Team
Software: Snap Survey Professional 11
Report Date: 18/8/16

1

Although our group can see some advantages in devolution we are concerned that the Combined Mayoral Authority would add an extra tier to local government, with extra costs being passed by existing local authorities to the council tax and business rate payers. (cont. on separate sheet)

Question 6 continued

The devolution proposals should have been part of a fundamental review of local democracy with the aim of reducing the number of tiers of local government.

The £15 million a year funding from Government being proposed is totally inadequate and would perpetuate the historic and current situation where Greater Lincolnshire is seriously under-funded.

Although we welcome the opportunity for discussion on this subject, it feels as if we are being consulted on a "fait accompli". The whole process is being conducted with undue haste.

We answered "Don't know" to questions 3 and 4 primarily because we felt we did not have enough clear information to come to a definitive conclusion.

One particular aspect that concerned us was that the Mayor is likely to be elected by the single transferable vote system. This could lead to the (STV)

selection of someone from a minor political party unrepresentative of the majority political view of Greater Lincolnshire.

2

The Devolution Agreement states that it is not seeking a transfer of power from existing Local Authority's, in this case, does this not create duplication in some areas and therefore extra expense?

The document is largely written in jargon which is difficult to understand for anyone who operates outside these fields. While I appreciate that there is great amount of technical background to this, as a consultation document it should have been written in plainer English.

The employment section in particular is unclear. I cannot ascertain what it is seeking to achieve on the ground and how it is going to do this. There is a lot of talk about strategies and co-operation with Government but nothing about what local business will receive from this. As it reads, it appears that at lot of this could be done without devolution through the County Council's Economic Development function and joint working with individual Council's Economic Development teams.

Transport section. Beyond the fact that the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority would extend across the current administrative boundaries with North and North- East Lincolnshire Council's, how is this creating more than the County Council's current highway functions?

Housing and Planning – the Combined Authority can set all the ambitious targets it likes but it is the private sector house builders that bring forward the housing, not the Local Authorities. While there may be an occasional situation where infrastructure or other broader support could help, underlying the low level of delivery is that fact that the recovery in the housing market has not reached much of Lincolnshire yet and throwing money at the problem will not resolve it. Developers will build when they know that they can sell. The issues affecting this are much wider than a devolved authority can address. Previous Governments removed the strategic planning role of County Council's and this appears as a plan to reintroduce this. Who is going to write this strategic plan? This would appear to be a backward step and an unnecessary cost. The suggestion that planning applications could be subject to call-in suggests a backdoor creation of an overarching Local Planning Authority for Greater Lincolnshire; this appears to be trying to usurp the existing local authorities planning function.

Infrastructure section, each Local Authority is expected to commit at least £100 million of its own resources to the Authority towards delivery of housing. The document does not say if this is £100 million over the life time of the devolution (30 years) or over the project period quoted (20 years). Will this sum be paid as an annual percentage of the total, in escalating sums reflecting inflation or phased with payment at certain points in the delivery? This will make a big difference ability of local authorities to meet their obligations. There is no indication of what the calculation of this £100 million is based on, whether the "at least" means some will be expected to contribute more, and how this additional sum will be determined? Will it be the size of the area, the respective budgets of the authorities in question (it's a much bigger percentage of a district council budget than a unitary), the number of sites to be supported in an area, the assessed barriers to development in a given area or the infrastructure needs of the Local Authority; and what guarantees there are that the £100 million will directly (or even indirectly) benefit the people living in that Local Authority area. What assurances are there that this money will not go to subsidise developer's profit margins? In respect of the proposals for streamlining the planning system "for applicants" this should in no way undermine the opportunity for local residents, interest groups, parish and town council's or businesses to be involved in the process.

Water - Support the need for co-ordinated and focused approach on water and flood risk issues and an accompanying investment programme. However, the costs involved in addressing these issues across Greater Lincolnshire will outstrip the funding currently available (including that provided through devolution) and there is no indication if devolution will be able to address this. It is unclear as to what is meant by "coastal flooding in particular represents a strategic scale of risk as well as significant ongoing opportunities for unlocking growth potential". In what way will coastal flooding unlock growth potential?

Public Sector Transformation

Public Protection. With reference to the suggestion to "explore options for greater local input into the provision of court services in Greater Lincolnshire to ensure access to justice is maintained across the area", would this mean the reinstatement of courts in some parts of the county that have recently lost theirs? In an area with poor levels of public transport, access to local courts for accused, offenders and victims of crime is an issue.

Health. This doesn't tell the reader anything. What, if anything, can devolution do about the problems in recruiting GPs and difficulty in obtaining appointments?

Finance and Funding. This section refers to the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority being able to use capital receipts from asset sales as revenue funding . As the Combined Authority does not in itself hold any assets, these are presumably the assets of the constituent authorities. Currently, if a Council decides to dispose of an asset to support its investment programme, 100% of the revenue will be spent within its area. What safeguards will there be in place to ensure that the sale of assets does not go to fund projects elsewhere in the Greater Lincolnshire Area that may have no benefit to those residents?

Paragraph 53 sets out to the opportunities to influence spending of EU funds coming into the area. As this was written pre-referendum, the paragraph will be shortly become redundant. No-one yet knows what the outcome will be in respect of the redistribution of the funds once paid to Europe. This leaves rather more questions that answers about the future spending power of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority in terms of whether more of that money will come its way (if indeed it gains the necessary support to be created) and if any of the spending national government choses to undertake with this money will negate any of the plans of the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority.

Paragraph 57. There is no indication as to what the costs will be of running this Authority. There must be some idea of the approximate numbers of staff that will be needed and how much of the budget this will account for and the level of precept that the Combined Authority will be raising. There should be some indications in the consultation so people have a better idea of what they are commenting on. I feel that it is a waste of resources setting up a paid mayor and the associated support staff that he or she will need.

3.

DIDNT INPUT COMMENT - J

As usual with Lincolnshire County Council
stionnaires, be it on the closure of old peoples' homes,
losing libraries, the questions are phrased in a way that
ours the wishes of the County Council.
, we should pursue extra powers and funding, yes the
ting 9 councils should work together and pursue further
ling, but at what cost?
e are to have a Mayoral Combined Authority, it is a
er layer of government on top of the county council, district
cils, parish & town councils. Any extra funding would be
allowed up by the board of councillors and their fees
expenses. The Combined Authority would no doubt build
ush office block for itself. The cost of a mayor, his/her
y, official car and outfit is a further cost. Most of any
a funding allocated to Lincolnshire would be used up
he said Authority before any action or decision had been
ded upon by it.
ou must have a Mayoral Combined Authority, I think
olnshire County Council should be dismissed as totally
necessary. Please don't waste any more of our
ney. Another layer of councillors is not necessary.

4.

25/7/16

Dear Sir,
My further views on the 'Greater Lincolnshire' plan. Why can't we not have North and North East Lincs as seperate counties. Couldn't we have Scunthorpe Council to run North Lincs, and Grimsby/Cleethorpes to run N.E. Lincs? Or the three ancient divisions of Lincolnshire, Lindsey, Kesteven and Holland, as seperate areas to run Lincs. Why do we have to be 'The Humber Area' when everyone wanted it to stay 'Lincolnshire'?
Why was it permissable in 74, to send government agents all over the country to make people have new counties' against their'.

will. This caused great mental upset and confusion, which is still carried on today by local banks and even doctors insisting on putting 'South Humberside' on letters, against most peoples will. I don't want 'North East Lincs' either! About half of my 1200 people I have asked like N.E. Lincs. But nearly 800 have signed my petition to bring the name 'Lincolnshire' back to Grimsby, or at least give us the choice, Lincs or N.E. Lincs, as we had no vote as I was expecting. Why? Only LOCAL people should decide the name of each area, or county of Britain. Historic counties were taken off everyone by force by the 1974 government, a dreadful thing to do, to a law-abiding public. Objectors were simply ignored. Hence my wanting to compensate people for what 2. happened. Mental health MATTERS

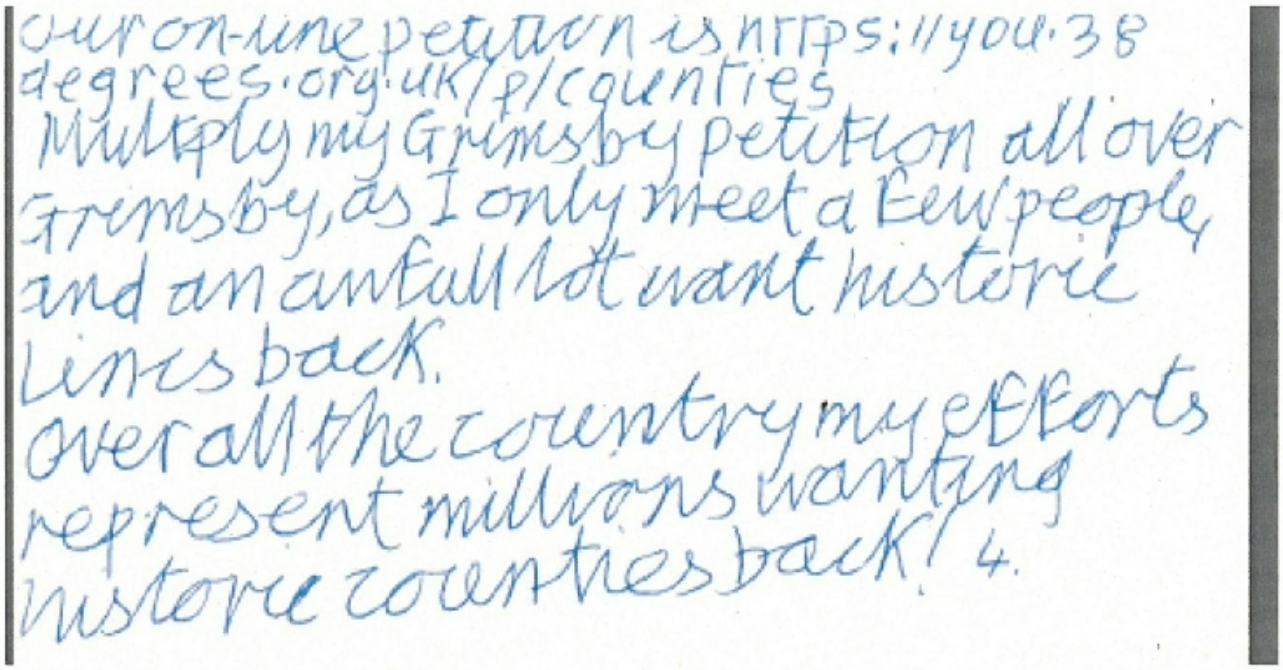
otherwise why spend millions sayin-g 'eat salad, drink water and exer-cise for better mental health, then. Forcibly 'rob' people of their history county! How can this be fair? And it causes stress, which is bad for one!

To give contentment and happin-ess to all, keep the 'new' county names, just as districts, like Scar-thoe, as over 42 years people have got used to them.

Then let Parliament legislate, to bring back all forcibly removed historic Counties, and let people have pride in their county, inste-ad of resentment. And let the local people of each area, approve or disapprove Parliaments plan.

Thanks.

P.S. Tell of their wonderfull long historic County history, so most people will like them, and their horrific 'removal'. 3. P.T.O.



GRIMSBY was part of Lincolnshire for 100s of years, until we were bullied into changes. First we had Humberside, then NE Lincs, and then the Humber area.

Why was this fair? No-one wanted the changes. We now have councils with the new county names.

Is it fair to dictate like this in a democracy?

Do you believe it is fair that local councils are wiping out our county names? Ted Heath's government sent bullies all over the country to force people to change to new counties. Now the councils are changing history by denying our real, historic counties ever existed. Why is this fair as no-one wanted it?

People like history, so why are our historic counties being wiped out?

If you agree with me, and want to keep our counties, please support my campaign.

Why should the government get away with bullying?

Please support:

https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/counties

5

2 August 2016

Dear Sirs,

Consultation on Greater Lincolnshire Devolution

I have read all the documentation of the proposed devolution to form Greater Lincolnshire and the proposed Mayor for the combined authority.

My basic feeling is that the Government has looked at a map and thought that it would be a good idea to draw a line round the ancient county of Lincolnshire and ignoring the three constituent parts of Holland, Kesteven and Lindsey. (perhaps through ignorance)

A similar procedure happened when the British Government, with the aid of the French, calved up the middle east in the last century. They did not take into account ethnic and religious differences when they created new boundaries for Iraq, Jordan, Palestine etc. Not having learnt their lesson they then messed around with India, Pakistan and what is now Bangladesh. The mess continues in West Africa.

Although this line drawing exercise is unlikely to result in the mayhem and bloodshed of the middle east, there are cultural differences across Lincolnshire which have not been examined properly. Grimsby and Scunthorpe may look like neighbours on a map but there are cultural differences between the two towns. There is not even a bus service linking the two towns directly, but both have direct bus services to Hull.

Lincoln on the other hand has a long historic heritage and was once a major city in England. The old heavy engineering tradition is now gone but the City is the centre of the County with transport links to most of the rest of the urban centres. But there appears to be no affinity with northern Lincolnshire where there seems to be a preference for shopping and other commercial links with Doncaster, Sheffield and Hull.

I feel sure that if evidence were to be collected from Boston, Stamford, Sleaford, Grantham and the other centres in the south of the county there would be more affinity to Peterborough and Nottingham than to Lincoln, let alone Grimsby and Scunthorpe.

As well as what seems to me an exercise by a civil servant drawing lines on a map which to him (or her) seem like a good idea, I feel that the whole exercise is a fudge. Central Government wants to spend money on London and the Home Counties with the HS2, third runway, cross rail and so on. Keep the North quiet with the 'Northern Power House' which takes care of Man-

chester, Liverpool and Leeds. Then there is Newcastle and Scotland that must be sweetened. So there are a few bits left round the fringes which can be thrown a few crumbs such as Cornwall and Devon, Wales, Cumbria and Lincolnshire.

The promise of £15 million per annum is peanuts at todays prices. It is not even one thousandth of the cost of HS2 or the third runway for London's airports.

In Lincolnshire there are no major motorways to attract business and industry except along the western fringes near the M1 and A1. There is no major railway line except a few branch lines linking to the East Coast main line in York, Doncaster, Newark and Peterborough. The so called "Trans Pennine Express" is subservient to the services from Leeds to Manchester

So we have a proposal to keep the natives quiet until they find that any extra money provided by central government, probably in terms of extra borrowing power rather than cash, is used to cover the cost of the extra bureaucracy.

I worked in local government at the time of the last major upheaval in the 1974 re-organisation. The authority where I worked was created from six local councils. Admittedly most of there were sleepy local councils which needed shaking up. When I retired 21 years later there was one authority with six subsections. Schemes were deferred whilst something could be found to appease one or more of the legacy authority elected members. Amongst the staff there were petty jealousies allowed to prosper because five district offices were retained.

Then there were other schemes designed in a similar manner to Greater Lincolnshire such as the metropolitan authorities around Manchester, Liverpool and the Tyne and Wear. We all know about the disaster of Humberside where there was no attempt to unify the district councils who were suspicious of being ruled from Hull and used to provide funds for the north bank of the Humber.

The proposal for a single police commissioner for the county as a whole has some merit. At present a villain can strip some lead of a roof in Grimsby. In less than half an hour he can be in Lincolnshire pretty safe in the knowledge that the Lincolnshire police have their own problems and not the time to busy themselves with something relatively minor from outside their area. I suppose that a similar situation exists between Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire forces.

I regret being so negative about "Greater Lincolnshire" but there is one saving grace and that is that the Royal Mail may be persuaded to remove "South Humberside" from its postcode address database.

Yours faithfully,

6

comments you would like to make, please do so in the box provided below.

A significant slice of funding will now not be available – see para 53 of the devolution document. Funding needs to be reconsidered given the directions Brexit vote.
As far as integrated transport is concerned, appearance of a bus would be welcome!
If we have a Mayoral Authority, how about taking out a layer of local government so either the County Council or District Council should go.
As for combining with the PCC – a good part of the document reviews around crime/law so why not dump the PCC completely. The mayor should cover police & fire as one service.
£15m is not much: it is less than £5/person/year – the authority is going to be lean!

Equality Monitoring Questions

You do not have to complete the following questions. If you do choose to answer them, this will help us to make informed decisions.

7

The devolution deal of an extra £15 a year is not nearly enough as a sizable portion of this will be spent on "jobs for the boys". Not leaving much much to be spent in the community we do not need more bureaucracy!

8

4th July 2016

I would like to make a few comments regarding the proposed scheme to elect a combined authority Mayor, hoping that similar minded people will write to you with the whole idea being shelved.

The idea of a Mayoral Combined Authority will just create another unnecessary level of bureaucracy at a time red tape is supposed to being cut.

Also in these difficult times of austerity with severe cuts being made across council services I have no doubt that the election of a mayor would involve another fat cat salary.

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner should remain as a seperate independant role and not combined with any other county post.

As regards extra powers the local and county authorities already have far reaching powers and do not require any additional ones.

The 10 councils should already be working together to prioritise growth, transport links, housing and general infrastructure without the need of an elected mayor.

Finally I feel that the Greater Lincolnshire area being a rural county has specific problems that many Shire or Metropolitan councils do not face and Central Government must realise this fact.

With all of our 10 councils working in tandem with some joined up approach our senior officials could do a lot more for the good of the wider community.

Yours Sincerely

9

DEVOLUTION CONSULTATION CONT.

Combined Authority" We have already got the 10 councils and their leaders. Why the need of forming another "Authority" and Mayor etc. Seems old fashioned and unnecessary, which in our opinion will use up money to set this up and to keep it running for years to come, when the money could be put to better use i.e. to repair our roads and infrastructure, and to build the houses we need for the people who badly need housing who are already here, and other things this area desperately need. I underline need, as there is a difference between want and need. People may want things but they don't necessarily need them. What one needs is the basic things for survival, i.e. a roof over ones head, warmth when it is cold, food when one is hungry, clean water when one is thirsty. Health and strength and work opportunities to enable people to look after themselves and their family's needs, without having to rely on handouts.

- The Council leaders, or appointed persons of the 10 councils can meet alternatively at each Council Office in the County, in regard to this at little expense. Keeping overheads down. You have worked together so far on the Devolution Project. Why the need to change. Change means more expense. Keep the status quo.

- Concentrate on what we need most, which is in our opinion, is an investment in the upkeep and upgrading of our roads and infrastructure.

- We desperately need a Medical School/College in our County to train Doctors /Nurses/Medical Support Service Workers who actually live here, who we know will be happy to stay and work in the County instead of paying Doctors etc out of the County over the top pay packages to entice them to live and work here.

- In your leaflet "Local Plan Have Your say" it says the Draft Local Plan set out how the area will respond to and increasing population. What about the people who are already here, needing housing without even thinking about an increasing population. You just talk about the increasing population. Therefore, it appears to us there will always be insufficient housing, a deficit. **Housing the people who are already here is a priority.** Not to bypass them and give housing to immigrants who have never lived and worked here, or have no affinity to the County. Its wrong.

- A serious look at our County's business and Industry is needed in our opinion to see if our young people are being properly trained, and that there is the right training available in order to do the jobs required. For now and in the future.

- That brings us to education and Schools. They need to have the right teachers who are going to be inspiring and positive and forward thinking about the future, and be able to pass that onto our children of the present and the future. Also, our School/College buildings must be up to standard and equipped in order to do the job properly. No good one without the other.

- We strongly disagree with combining the roles as it is too much power for one person, and is undemocratic. It is open to misuse of their position and corruption.

10

LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

08 JUL 2016

PUBLIC HEALTH

Lincolnshire does not need a Mayoral Combined Authority or a Directly Elected Mayor; it will be yet another six figure salary funded by our Council Tax, and no more effectual that what we have now. Local representatives are far more effectual, knowing the needs and problems of their area and their residents. Instead of yet another salary being paid out, that money should be; and needs to be spent on our roads, there cannot be many road in Lincolnshire that are not plagued with potholes, that remain untreated for years and need urgent attention. It is costing all of us motorists a great deal in repairs and tyre replacement; the maintenance of our road surfaces is a basic requirement for which we pay our Council Tax. Waste bin emptying, Policing and the state of our roads are the three priorities that Lincolnshire governing bodies should be dealing with and benefiting all of it's residents

11 - missing comment

19.07.2016

It seems to me that we are being dragooned into the elected mayor situation in order to access resources. One must agree to the need for inward investment & extra resources but under the blackmail conditions of a mayor. If we have to have a mayor then at least combine the role with the wholly unnecessary & irrelevant role of PCC. Apart from a slavish adherence to US practice I can see no enthusiasm for either post from either the electorate or, I suspect, Council leaders who will become subservient.

Mark

COUNCIL

H

Lincolnshire County Council
Public Health
County Offices
Newland
Lincoln LN1 1YL

5th July 2016

Dear Sir

Please find enclosed Devolution Forms, only just see in the newsletter, and duly filled in – why these proposed new ideas will make any difference at all is quite beyond me.

We have a building in Bourne which is apparently a Police Station or Office but it is some years since anybody has actually seen a Policeman or Woman in Bourne should one need a member of the declining force we have to 'phone – who!

Many roads in and around Bourne are in urgent need of repair the odd bits are done now and again but stretches of the A6121 have not been resurfaced for years. We have just spent £680.00 on repairs to our car after hitting a pot-hole in the Stamford area – writing and complaining to the Council Leader is just a waste of time no doubt to busy on these new wonderful ideas which will just cost more money and achieve very little.

Apparently the council can no longer afford cut the grass on the various roundabouts no funds.

Over 2000 new houses are being built in Bourne – on useful agriculture land going back to terraces with little or no gardens with a parking space some way away and the internal roads just get smaller – this is progress – the roads in and around Bourne have not improved so the traffic build up during the mornings and evenings is huge one could just go on…..! Public Toilets are a thing of the past.

Yet we pay our Council Taxes regularly every month presumably to pay for Council employees pensions!

Yours sincerely

13

DEAR KAREN SPENCER.

AFTER READING COUNTY NEWS, I FILLED IN SECTION 12, MRS THATCHER STARTED THE HOUSING SHORTAGE, BY SELLING COUNCIL HOUSE TO RICH PEOPLE, SO THEY COULD LET THEM OUT TO WORKING CLASS PEOPLE, BUT DID NOT BUILD ANY NEW ONES.

IF WE CANNOT AFFORD A GOOD POLICE FORCE, HOW ON EARTH CAN WE AFFORD A NEW MAYOR + A POLICE COMMISSIONER? WOULD IT BE ANOTHER ADDITION TO MY COUNCIL TAX BILL, IT NOW LOOKS LIKE THATCHERS POLL TAX. IF WE ALL GOT 10% PAY INCREASE IT WOULD NOT BE SO BAD, BUT TO RECEIVE IT AND THEN HAVE YOUR JOB

IS BEING GREEDY, I WONDER IF HE WILL MOVE HOME AND MOVE TO HIS HOME COUNTRY, AFRICA MAYBE?,

BOSTON BYEPASS SEEMES A LONG WHILE COMING, AFTER ALL THE BYE-PASSES IN LINCOLN HAVE BEEN COMPLETED IT WOULD HELP THE SLEEPNESS HOLIDAY TRAFFIC ETC. AFTER SPENDING A LOT OF TAXPAYERS MONEY ON (OUT ER) SIGNS IN THE MARSHLANDS OF LINCOLNSHIRE LEADING TO NOWHERE? THERE IS NO HIGHLANDS IN MARSHLAND, MARSHLAND IS VERY FLAT, A LOT OF MARSHLAND USE TO BE COVERED IN SEA WATER, SO THE TEACHERS AT MY SCHOOL USE TO TELL US.

YOURS TRULY

14

INPUT ANSWERS
DIDN'T INPUT COMMENT

LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
29 JUL 2016
PUBLIC HEALTH

29/07/16
JT

27.07.2016

Dear Sir

Consultation on a Greater Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined Authority

Thank you for sending me a contribution Form. I feel that I cannot adequately answer within a space of approx. 19cm x 4cm given that there is a number of matters to discuss.

It is my contention that it would be wrong to expect the people of Greater Lincolnshire to choose a Mayor to run a combined authority. The person chosen would have to be one of great experience. Ideally, not sought only in this Country, but from a much wider field including Global areas. The Terms of Reference he would be expected to work under should be agreed by all ten councils.

In my view a new Authority would have to consider the qualifications and experience of local councillors. It is not enough to rely on local councillors who have secondary employment – causing problems with communications. They are paid for their services and therefore they should be available. The system of electing local councillors is influenced by a "friend of a friend" network or motivated by political bias. It is therefore very important that the "mayor" has a competent team of councillors.

Local enterprise Partnerships can be used effectively if monitored properly. The use of partnerships contracting work out has become a grey area and needs greater transparency.

I have a feeling that the promise by Mr Osbourne to give funding, providing that a "Mayor" is involved, has influenced the authors of the consultation document. The Ten councils think that a Combined Authority will be able to take advantage of further funding from the Government to help with additional funds for infrastructure, investment for housing, skills and criminal justice. For 27 years we have seen no serious improvement, except an attempt to alter a bus station and alter a lot of roads to help facilitate a number of super markets. Why have these opportunities not been introduced during the last 25 years ? - the simple answer seems to be that the councils are working with a Government still acting as though we are in the 17th century. Procrastination is their key word.

The implementation of a Lincolnshire Mayoral Combined Authority has to take action to operate in a modern way.

I disagree with the introduction of Police Commissioners. The election turnout was pathetic – there is no need at all for a second tier, and a good Mayor worth his

sall could easily absorb their responsibilities. The truth is that police commissioners are accepting a huge salary which is inconsistent with the work they purport to do

The introduction of a Combined Authority will bring about long waiting lists for district councils, Call centre confusion, priority lists and categories according to status.

I'm pleased to be able to take part in this consultation, but unfortunately I believe that it will be accepted despite the consultation. It may be all cut and dried.

Yours Sincerely – Resident.

15

Do Turkeys vote for Christmas?

Of course they don't!

BUT unfortunately neither do our politicians when it comes to reducing their numbers & the excess hot air they produce about their own importance. When was the last time a politician voted for their own demise?

No clear explanation has been given as how Lincolnshire County Council & the proposed mayor are going to work together. Is the elected mayor in charge of Lincolnshire? Is the leader of the Council in charge of Lincolnshire? When Government say OUR tax money has run out, who is going to pay for this ill thought out mess? Will mayor going on to vote for their own demise?

On the subject of the mayor taking over the PCC – How is this going to work with 2 different Police Forces (Lincolnshire & Humberside)? What if the Humberside PCC doesn't want to give up their authority? After all he/she is an elected Politician and highly unlikely to vote for their own demise?

This whole idea is ill thought through, comes from a city/conurbation based idea, with no thought of RURAL workings.

At best it could be described as a poor reinvention of a wheel that existed prior to the invention of Humberside in the 1970's when Lincolnshire was a whole county! The only thing is that it has taken our politicians this long to come up with a new re invention of an old wheel. It is another layer of Government/Politicians we DON'T need.

16

LOCALLY, WITH MORE POWER, FUNDING, INVESTMENT, AND THE ABILITY TO LOBBY EFFECTIVELY, I DO HAVE CONCERNS THAT A MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY WILL JUST BE ANOTHER EXPENSIVE LAYER OF BEURACRACY, THOUGH IF IT GETS RID OF THE WASTEFUL POLICE COMMISSIONER POST, GO FOR IT!
I ALSO WORRY THAT DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYORS AND AUTHORITY WILL JUST BECOME ANOTHER BRANCH OF PETTY PARTY POLITICS AND POLITICIANS, WHO WILL VOTE ON THEIR PARTY LINES, RATHER THAN WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE COUNTY, THE ONLY THING THEY WILL AGREE ON IS HOW MUCH TO RAISE THEIR EXPENSES BY!

17

As you will gather, I believe the idea of creating yet more tiers of regional decision-making and levels of bureaucracy is a dreadful one. Surely the current EU debacle is an indication of public suspicion of such conglomerates that seem to operate well outside an individual's sphere of influence?

I think, as a nation, we are beset by constantly tinkering with the way national and regional services are delivered. Instead of setting about finding methods of improving the governmental structures that already exist, we waste time, energy and resources attempting to impose different and often conflicting systems. Inevitably this surely leads to confusion, distrust and finally despair amongst a majority ordinary citizens?

Even the proposed name - Mayoral Combined Authority - strikes dread in my mind and the idea that some unfamiliar and distant dignitary at its head might also share the role with that of Police and Crime Commissioner fills me with a profound sense of incredulous desolation.

18

Devolution Consultation

Dear Sir / Madam,

I enclose a devolution consultation questionnaire. As with all the questionnaires you produce the questions provoke the sorts of answers you wish to hear so that you can claim to be supporting the wishes of the electorate. However, by its very nature it does not address some of the issues the proposal raises.

How many people for instance, could 'strongly disagree' with a proposal that may receive £15 m funding annually to develop the infrastructure

2

of Lincolnshire.

The fundamental question which you studiously ignore is how the new authority will fit in and affect the current ~~structure~~ of multi-layered structure of local government that now exists.

Your article embraces 'localism' a concept lauded by the now abandoned Mr. Pickles - but a concept studiously ignored by the existing level of government who are only interested in keeping hold of duties and responsibilities in an excess of self-preservation.

I can illustrate - when you "consulted" about parking policy in the County which you put out to private contractors to administer (at

3/ for any reason to do with parking but to save money - Bourne Town Council produced a thoughtful and considered reply which was not even acknowledged, let alone discussed.

I have on several occasions responded to "consultation" exercises which are nothing to do with the true meaning of consultation - having communication ~~with~~ about policy with people who might be affected with a view to taking into account the views expressed.

Your questionnaires are produced by your P.R. department so that you can retrospectively fit the answer to carefully constructed questions into your re-determined proposal.

I am aware that consulting with people in a meaningful way about

4/ complex issues is extremely difficult. It is likely that you will get very simplistic answers to complex questions from ~~people~~ a very small proportion of the electorate ~~as~~ and that many of the recipients will be those who have an axe to grind or from a pressure group. Additionally, as your PR department knows full well, the response will be aquidevered by the style and content of the consultation document

The major concern of the devolution issue, in what should be the structure of local government in the best interests of the County residents in the future

5/ At present we are overloaded with levels of government and organisation.

Some services (ambulances for instance) are provided on a regional basis. The performance of the ambulance service is a poor example but maybe regional is best for very big items - police, roads etc ??

We have a County, desperate to hang on to its powers that is ludicrously responsive to administration, with the cost of Councillors set at increasing when services are being cut.

We have 10 districts each with its own huge administrative ~~cost~~ costs, ~~[illegible]~~ with many (~~[illegible]~~) Councillors on both local and district Councils doubling up on allowances, responses etc when

6. There is inevitable conflict of interests. When we can have a 6 month stand off ie cutting some grass and hedges, because district says its highways and therefore Country's responsibility and County saying it is off the highway and therefore Districts responsibility is bonnecrey gone mad.

Now you propose to introduce a new body; to include "councillors from the 10 Councils". Now there's another opportunity for Councillors to claim fees, expenses on top of their current ~~[illegible]~~ very generous allowances. It will not ~~[illegible]~~ change the personnel "governing" the County. Perhaps we can chose Councillors who are District

7/ and County to be Mayoral as well. The same people, or at least people with the same political agenda will create another expensive tier of administration without fresh thinking, ideas, outlook etc.

I propose that your consultation now informs the people, what will be the cost of the new Authority. Even better, propose that the County be disbanded. The big items become regional or Mayoral, most items transferred to the districts and many items pushed down to the towns and parishes who are most aware of local issues. That's localism in action.

On top of the £15 m extra funding we could probably save

8/ as much or more in the rate generated by County and to resume the cuts in services that are planned.

I appreciate that I fall foul of my own declaration that there are simple, answers to complex problems, but openly up a consultation of this magnitude beyond a framed questionnaire to public meeting will every town and parish council would much of real consultation rather than a PR exercise, presented in an over-sized self-congratulatory propaganda magazine which cost £200,000/annum.

Yours faithfully

19

Another level!

As I understand it, the proposed Mayoral Combined Authority would only be responsible for the newly devolved powers and, as such, would not replace Lincolnshire County Council.

Whilst the benefits of these new powers (and the attendant increase in income) would be considerable and extremely desirable, I fail to see why an additional tier of bureaucracy would be necessary. Surely, if existing departments of LCC were to absorb the new powers, overall costs would be lower than setting up a new body – especially when the no doubt generous salary of the Mayor is taken into account.

Also, it has been stated that the new body would be "a board including councillors from the 10 councils, chaired by an elected mayor…" This does not say how many councillors from each council, nor does it say the board would be exclusively made up of these councillors. This raises two questions; 1, how would residents of the various areas be reassured that their views and interests would be adequately presented? And, 2, how would board members not from the 10 councils be 'chosen'?

Mayor may not

I feel the likelihood of coming out of the electoral process with a Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire with whom a majority of the county's residents is happy is rather low.

With such a huge geographical area and relatively few large centres of population, it seems highly likely that the victor in such a contest will turn out to be someone well known only in his local area – and it is odds-on to be Lincoln.

Now, I have nothing at all against Lincoln or its people but, if the whole of the electorate are to have faith in the office and its occupant, they must be convinced that the interests of all are at the heart of his or her agenda.

A Bobby's job?

As for possibly combining of the roles of County Mayor and Police and Crime Commissioner, I feel this should be approached with great care. I may be rather old-fashioned but, while I believe the holders of these posts will need to work closely, I feel it may not be a simple matter to find one person able to carry them both out in an effective manner. There may even be conflicts of interest arising from such an amalgamation.