



HAMPSHIRE

chamber of commerce

Friday 19th May 2017

Mr Richard Jones
Head of Policy, Communications and Partner Engagement
Solent Local Enterprise Partnership
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Portsmouth
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Dear Richard,

RE: The Solent LEP Development Cost Fund

The Hampshire Chamber of Commerce wishes to offer support of the Southampton City Council bid to allow them to carry out a feasibility of a joint conference centre / cruise terminal concept, to establish amongst other things a true market analysis and spatial needs.

Whilst the City has a number of small conferencing options there is no major venue and there is a need to establish the real viability of a larger venue. With the University presence in the City we would hope that this would add significantly to the conferencing / event market.

From some previous work that we have done with Peter Gunn, Chief Executive of BH Live that runs the Bournemouth International Centre (BIC) in Bournemouth together with The Pyramids in Portsmouth and over 100 other smaller sites, we would highlight these key findings:-

- * Conference & Exhibition Centres in the major Cities help to raise profile but are not without significant capital costs and subsidies.
- * Cardiff and Liverpool are currently front runners - Liverpool up to 12,000 square meters.
- * Market is very competitive and International - Cities are buying market share.
- * Most Centres are subsidised i.e. Birmingham with NEC and Liverpool.
- * Projects and Investment are looked to be a long term gain to boost the surrounding economy.
- * New developments are state of the art making conversions difficult to complete for the top conferences.
- * Southampton if positioned correctly could or should ideally compliment Bournemouth.
- * Needs to look for a different type to attract i.e. Seawork, Marine University specialism etc.

In light of this, The Hampshire Chamber of Commerce would welcome any development that would potentially enhance the economic vibrancy of the City and potentially attract investment and increased economic activity.

Yours sincerely




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