



Council

Date 22nd January 2024

Subject: Devolution for Greater Lincolnshire

Report by:

The Chief Executive

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To provide members with a briefing and the opportunity to debate the Devolution proposals agreed by Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council and the North East Lincolnshire Council.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

- 1 Note the progress on the proposed Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal
- 2 Continues to engage with the implementation of devolution arrangements,
- 3 Delegates the submission of a Council response to the consultation to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Leader in line with paragraph 3.5 and comments expressed during
- 4 Receives a further report on completion of the consultation process.
- 5 Request officers prepare a report and recommendations on the establishment of a Joint Committee for district councils, for presentation to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in March 2024 with a final report to an appropriate Full Council Meeting.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The devolution proposal will create a Mayoral County Combined Authority (MCCA) as included in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. MCCAs are a new model of devolution introduced through this Act to reflect specific governance arrangements of areas with two-tier government.

District and Borough Councils do not sign off the MCCA as that is the responsibility of the three Constituent Councils (LCC, NL, NEL). A level three devolution deal does not change the current structure of local government in Lincolnshire.

It is proposed that District Councils will create a Joint Committee, to appoint four district leaders to the MCCA, and to act as a forum for district councils to consider matters connected to the functional competence of the MCCA. There will be opportunities for district councils to appoint members to serve on the MCCA itself, a scrutiny panel, and several advisory boards establish to further partnership governance in areas linked to the functional competence of the MCCA.

Financial : - FIN/133/24/SL

There are no financial implications arising from this report. Devolution will bring the opportunity to make the case for additional funding for projects within West Lindsey, to accelerate delivery of the council's vision and priorities for the district.

The devolution agreement does not commit the Council to financial liabilities, and the agreement requires the Mayoral Combined Authority to secure Council approval before it implements projects in the district which could create ongoing financial commitments.

Staffing :

The devolution proposal has no human resource implications for WLDC. Officers linked to priorities for economic development, development management, housing strategy, and services linked to environment, climate action, health and wellbeing may be involved in partnership groups and project collaboration, as they are currently.

The infrastructure required to manage the District contribution to the MCCA may require additional resources of a central nature to coordinate activity but this has not currently been determined. If any such requirement cannot be contained within existing budget members will be advised.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

There are no implications for Equality and Diversity arising from this paper.

Data Protection Implications :

There are no data protection implications arising from this paper

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

Whilst the MCCA will engage on projects across the County, it is not possible to assess the climate change impact at this time.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this paper however it is worth noting that in some devolved arrangements, the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner has been abolished and the powers and duties of the PCC transferred to the Mayor. This is not the case for Greater Lincolnshire and, under the proposals, the role of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner will remain unaffected by a devolution deal.

Health Implications:

There are no health implications arising from this report.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

LCC report on devolution

[Report Reference: \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](http://modern.gov.co.uk)



Devolution
Overview.pptx

LCC Slide Deck :

Devolution Agreement for Greater Lincolnshire

<https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s59997/Appendix%20A%20-%20Greater%20Lincolnshire%20devolution%20deal.pdf>

Devolution proposal – Final

<https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s59998/Appendix%20B%20-%20Greater%20Lincolnshire%20Combined%20Authority%20Proposal%20final.pdf>

Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Proposal Consultation

<https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s59999/Appendix%20C%20-%20Devolution%20Questionnaire.pdf>

Levelling Up White Paper 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

Risk Assessment :

The devolution proposal does not introduce risk to delivery of WLDC services or priorities, nor does it introduce legislative, regulatory or reporting requirements that impact delivery of council services.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Context

- 1.1. It is generally considered that devolution, or decentralisation, of decision making, policy development and resource allocation, brings benefits to local communities. By way of example, recent reports have indicated that empowering local government to lead on climate action would deliver more cost effectively and quicker than a centralised approach.
- 1.2. The UK is also a party to the Council of Europe Charter of Local Self Government, which advocates for legal and financial independence for local and regional government in Europe.
- 1.3. The 2022 Levelling Up White Paper established the UK Governments current approach to devolution in England, recognising that England is one of the more centralised nations in Europe. The 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act provides the legislative framework for establishing devolution in England progressively through to 2030.
- 1.4. A devolution agreement for Greater Lincolnshire was announced by the UK Government on 22 November 2023. The agreement was agreed by Full Council meetings by the three constituent authorities by 4 December 2023. There is no provision in legislation for district councils, as non-constituent authorities, to approve or otherwise the devolution agreement. The devolution proposal is now subject to consultation in the form of an online survey which is open to anyone who lives, works or visits Lincolnshire. The consultation is led by Lincolnshire County Council and closes on 29th January 2024. WLDC has promoted the consultation on its social media channels, and internally with staff and members.
- 1.5. The proposed funds devolved into Greater Lincolnshire, and the agreement compares favourably in comparison with similar agreements elsewhere, both in terms of the level of funding available and the increased representation envisaged for district councils compared to other areas.
- 1.6. This report summarises: the devolution agreement; governance for devolution; the next steps; recommendations.

2. The Devolution Agreement

- 2.1. The devolution agreement allocates an additional £24million per year to Greater Lincolnshire for 30 years, a total of £720million.
- 2.2. Additionally, £28.4million has been allocated to Greater Lincolnshire, to be allocated prior to the MCCA being established in 2025. Possible projects in West Lindsey include; Roundabout at Nettleham, A15/A46 (£3.3m) and Flood Prevention, Market Rasen and Kirkby on Bain (£1.3m).
- 2.3. The agreement provides for the devolution of strategy and budgets related to skills, providing local partners with the opportunity to focus on skills development for key local economic sectors.

2.4. The agreement also provides for devolution of multi-year transport budgets, with flexibility to allocate funds to local priorities.

2.5 A summary slide deck provided by LCC is attached as Appendix 1

3. Governance for Devolution

3.1. The agreement provides for the establishment of a Mayoral County Combined Authority, chaired by a directly elected mayor. The constituent authorities (Lincolnshire County, North and North East Lincolnshire Unitary Councils) will each have two seats on the MCCA. District Councils will be allocated 4 seats, via a joint committee of district council leaders.

3.2. District Councils will have voting rights other than in relation to transport and the mayor's administrative budget.

3.3. District councils will be allocated seats on a scrutiny panel and several advisory boards.

3.4. The devolution agreement, which is the agreement between the Secretary of State DLUHC, and the Constituent Authorities can be found via the links that follow. The devolution proposal, which sets out the detailed proposals for consultation purposes, can also be found via the links below, together with links to the White Paper and the Act.

3.5. It is envisaged that a consultation response from the Council should focus on the following:

3.5.1. To welcome the alignment of the devolution proposal;

3.5.2. To welcome the focus on employment, skills, and economic development; the environment, homes, and communities; and transport;

3.5.3 Clearly object to any additional costs falling on the residents of West Lindsey and seek for the removal of any potential levy;

3.5.4 Acknowledge that whilst a mayor is not a preferred option Council recognise that the deal would not be possible without acquiescing to the central government requirement for a Mayor.

4. Next Steps

4.1. The consultation process will conclude on 29 January 2024. Links to the consultation survey and information are provided here: -. <https://lincolnshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s59999/Appendix%20C%20-%20Devolution%20Questionnaire.pdf>

- 4.2. Review of the proposals based on consultation responses will be completed by the end of February 2024, leading to a submission to the UK Government in spring 2024.
- 4.3. The UK Government is due to put in place an Establishment Order for the new arrangements by summer 2024.
- 4.4. The County Combined Authority is due to be established in late 2024, with the election of a Greater Lincolnshire Mayor in May 2025.

5. Consultation Response

- 5.1. To submit a response to the consultation from the Council by 29 January, in line with paragraph 3.5 of this report, with delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.
- 5.2. To engage proactively in the implementation of the new arrangements and the allocation of funds specified within the devolution agreement and proposal.
- 5.3. To provide timely and positive public communication, enabling communities to engage in the devolution agenda for Greater Lincolnshire.
- 5.4. To request officers to prepare a report and recommendations on the establishment of a Joint Committee for district councils, for presentation to Corporate Policy and Resources in March 2024 with a final report to an appropriate Full Council.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 6.1 There are inevitably a range of options that could be envisaged for devolution. Nevertheless, devolution based on a Mayoral County Combined Authority is the preferred UK Government option and the only route available for devolution at the current time.
- 6.2 The proposed funds devolved into Greater Lincolnshire, and the agreement compares favourably in comparison with similar agreements elsewhere, both in terms of the level of funding available and the increased representation envisaged for district councils compared to other areas.
- 6.3 The agreement creates a platform for further negotiation with the UK Government leading to greater devolution of powers and resources. This has already been the case for Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and West Midlands Combined Authority who progressed to enhanced devolution deals in 2023.
- 6.4 Therefore the Council are asked to agree the following recommendations:

- 1 Note the progress on the proposed Greater Lincolnshire Devolution Deal
- 2 Continues to engage with the implementation of devolution arrangements,
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