

Agenda Item 5

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive
North Lincolnshire Council

Agenda Item:
Meeting: 1 July 2022

**GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

THE ROAD TO DEVOLUTION

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 That the GLJSOC note the work being undertaken on the Devolution initiative.
- 1.2 That the GLJSOC note the proposed timescales on the various workstrands and possible dates in bringing these together.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 There is a close correlation between devolution at the correct level and economic growth of a region. This point was reinforced recently through the Government's Levelling Up White Paper – February 2022.
- 2.2 The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 allowed for the establishment of Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) to provide Combined Authorities (CAs) with strong local leaders with a mandate to deliver local growth.
- 2.3 The devolution deals conducted within the framework of the 2016 Act have used a deal-based approach. Greater Lincolnshire did construct a non-Mayoral Combined Authority deal with Government in 2016 but for several reasons did not follow it through.
- 2.4 Mayoral devolution deals have typically included additional investment funding, as well as devolved multi-year budgets and franchising powers and greater local influence over some strategic planning and regeneration powers. Mayors have received some revenue raising powers too, such as a Mayoral Precept and a business rates supplement.
- 2.5 Within the Levelling Up White Paper, a new devolution framework for England is outlined. The Government's preferred model of devolution is one with a directly elected leader covering a well-defined economic geography with a clear and direct mandate, strong accountability and the convening power to make change happen. However, because this may not suit all areas, their framework sets out a flexible, tiered approach, allowing areas to deepen devolution at their own pace and with unanimous agreement or not.

2.6 This paper aims to bring together the existing workstrands being implemented to research the best route forward for possible Devolution on a Great Lincolnshire geography whilst concurrently gauging business sentiment towards such a direction.

3. DETAIL OF OPTIONS/PROPOSAL

3.1 To bring together the existing workstrands being implemented to research the best route forward for possible Devolution on a Greater Lincolnshire geography whilst concurrently gauging business sentiment towards such a direction.

3.2 Devolution Workstrands:

3.2.1 **Greater Lincolnshire Visioning:** Inner Circle Consulting were procured and an oversight group consisting of representatives from Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire Council and West Lindsey District Council (Chief Executive Lead). There have been two Greater Lincolnshire wide events held to gauge views and opinions on where we all see a Greater Lincolnshire by 2050. The first meeting was via Teams and consisted of Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives and the second event was partner wide and held in person at the Petwood Hotel in Woodhall Spa.

3.2.2 **Business Engagement:** At the GLJSOC meeting of 11 March 2022 it was agreed to undertake engagement with our local businesses to gauge their interest, understanding and desire for a potential devolution model. This engagement was commissioned early May through the Greater Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership and overseen by North Lincolnshire Council and consists of a series of web based surveys and information coupled with face to face and teams based roundtable events. This business engagement will stop early July with a full report and analysis due later that month.

3.2.3 **Skills Development:** Building upon the work undertaken through both the GLJSOC and the Greater Lincolnshire meeting of ten Leaders and Chief Executives reflected in the basic ten asks of any potential devolution deal there has been a joint Greater Lincolnshire approach to developing the skills ask. This has been led by North East Lincolnshire Council.

3.2.4 **Infrastructure:** Similar to the above a joint Greater Lincolnshire group has been established being led through Lincolnshire County Council to address infrastructure needs within the Greater County geography. This is designed to build upon the work being undertaken through the SIDP group chaired by the Chief Executive North Kesteven and develop key principles through which to embed true county wide

infrastructure enhancement addressing both transport and communication issues.

- 3.2.5 **Investment:** Issues related to investment and development models not identified as pure Skills or Infrastructure are being picked up through an additional workstrand and being discussed regularly. Upper tier officers meet weekly to assess progress on the various workstrands and bring in key partners when applicable.

4. RESOURCE AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The visioning work has involved additional financial contribution from the Local Authorities within Greater Lincolnshire. The workstrands outlined are being met through existing resources.
- 4.2 There are no known legal implications with this report or the work being undertaken.

5. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES (INCLUDE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IF RELEVANT)

- 5.1 None identified.

6. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 It is currently planned that the visioning work will be completed by the late summer, the business engagement similarly with the feedback of this analysis into the skills, infrastructure and investment workstrands taking place in the Autumn 2022.
- 6.2 It is envisaged that bringing this all together into a draft County Deal to possibly consult further on could be formalised by the late Autumn / early Winter.

7. GOVERNANCE – DECISION(S) FOR MEMBER COUNCIL’S REQUIRED (in accordance with the Joint Committee’s Terms of Reference).

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That members note the work being undertaken on this initiative.
- 8.2 That members note the proposed timescales on the various workstrands and possible dates in bringing these together.

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

Address:
North Lincolnshire Council
Church Square House
30-40 High Street
SCUNTHORPE
DN15 6NL
Author: Simon Green
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report – None.