

**Public
Key Decision - Yes**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution Deal
Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 16 June 2016
Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader
Report by: Managing Director
Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Leaders of 23 Councils and 2 Local Enterprise Partnerships have been in discussions with Government over a devolution deal for Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Norfolk and Suffolk. The results of these discussions are now ready to be considered by all parties. Although the Council's Constitution technically allows Cabinet to make the decision on whether to be part of a devolution deal, this short report sets out the reasons why Cabinet are progressing escalation of the debate and decision to Full Council.

Recommendation:

That a report be presented to a special meeting of Full Council on 29 June to consider devolution proposals so far as they relate to Huntingdonshire.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report clarifies that Cabinet intends not to exercise its executive powers to determine the Council's position on a devolution deal.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Discussion have been ongoing now across the three counties of Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk and the unitary council of Peterborough to agree a devolution deal with Government, as trailed in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.
- 2.2 Deal documents are now emerging, and each organisation is required to determine its own position on the proposals before final sign-off by Government. The Governments prescribed timescale for doing so is 4 July 2016. Once that is resolved it is intended that consultation begins on governance during July and August so as to allow the legislative cycle to begin in October such that the elections in May 2017 can accommodate any necessary changes to governance.

3. PROPOSALS AND REASONING

Although Cabinet have the authority to determine the Council's position on these issues, there are compelling reasons to put this issue to a meeting of Full Council:

- commitment to a deal will necessarily require consultation with the public on changes to governance in the area by introducing an Elected Mayor;
- there are issues to reflect on in terms of a geography for a potential deal;
- there may be issues of local sensitivity that need reflecting on in either this or any future deals;
- both the current and future deals will extend the transfer of powers and resources which may lead to the redesign of public services; and
- the assessment of the likely impact of a devolution deal on Huntingdonshire is one which is felt should be made in the inclusive environment of Full Council.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 4.1 Referring this item to Full Council allows for full and open involvement of all Councillors. Given the potential significance of the issue, a special meeting of Council is being convened so as to avoid the risk of a crowded agenda limiting debate on this one item.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND / OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 All strands of the Corporate Plan are served directly or indirectly by the proposals around devolution and links will be fully articulated in the report to Council.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Referral of this matter to Full Council is permitted in the Council's Constitution.

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