

**GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE**  
**JOINT STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**Levelling Up White Paper and County Deals**

**1. OBJECTIVE AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To update the Joint Committee on the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper expected to be published in October 2021.
- 1.2 To consider what this means for Greater Lincolnshire in the context of a recent letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in respect of County Deals.
- 1.3 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are inviting local areas to commence conversations about devolution options which will be set out in the white paper, including County Deals.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Government announced its intention in the Queens Speech to introduce a Levelling Up White Paper later this year. The White Paper will build upon activity already being implemented to level up across the UK and will set out “bold new policy interventions to improve livelihoods and opportunities in all parts of the UK.”
- 2.2 The Levelling Up White Paper presents an opportunity to put councils at the heart of delivering the Government’s programme to improve opportunities in all parts of the country focusing on improving living standards; growing the private sector; improving health, education, and policing; strengthening communities and local leadership and restoring pride in place.
- 2.3 In advance of the publication of the White Paper, the Secretary of State wrote to local authorities setting out their commitment to devolving power to local places and closer to citizens through strong local accountability. Engagement with local authorities will take place throughout the Summer, in advance of the Levelling Up White Paper. Opportunities for devolution will be achieved beyond the combined mayoral authority, which remains an option for those areas that are

interested. In addition, County Deals will be introduced to areas where this can provide a better fit beyond city regions.

#### 2.4 County Deals will be guided by the following principles:

- Strong local leadership will be fundamental, providing a single point of accountability.
- County devolution should operate across a sensible economic geography of a suitable scale and one based on local identity, bringing local partners together and with powers exercised at the right level to make a difference for local communities.
- Proposals expected to demonstrate improvements in governance, efficiency, and local service join-up that support the delivery of levelling up.
- To include significant reform proposals, including ways to achieve greater financial efficiency.

2.5 It is anticipated that there will be early pilots agreed in the short term for readily deliverable proposals on County Deals.

### 3. **DETAIL OF OPTIONS/ PROPOSAL**

3.1 It is proposed that the Joint Committee support further work to be undertaken via the Joint Intelligence and Strategy Unit to develop a range of options setting out what types of flexibilities and specific powers we would like to see from a County Deal for Greater Lincolnshire.

3.2 Options will need to consider and demonstrate:

- Governance models that demonstrate strong local leadership accountability and ability to deliver the powers to be devolved
- Congruence with the Levelling Up agenda – enable long-term growth and productivity in the local economy; improve skills and training for individuals and communities; enhance access to good public services; improve the quality of life for the local population through better local transport and digital infrastructure, improved sport, culture, and heritage and removing barriers to the labour market and reducing inequalities.
- Maximising capacity and capability to deliver strategic levelling up investments use of resources to maximise delivery

### 4. **RESOURCE AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Resource implications are not quantified at this stage. Development of the options will be met from the existing resources of the 3 councils. The Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government has indicated that they do not expect local authorities to commission consultants to prepare business case documents nor expect a list of funding asks.

4.2 The Joint Strategic Oversight Committee potentially provides a governance mechanism upon which to build a County Deal around. It is anticipated that the White Paper will provide further detail on the required governance structures that provide strong local accountability.

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

5.1 Risks and opportunities will be considered as part of developing options.

6. **CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT**

6.1 Consultation and engagement will be undertaken as required.

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

7.1 A decision will be required by individual councils to agree participation and governance of any proposed devolution arrangements.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 The Joint Strategic Oversight Committee note the content of the report and support further work to develop options on a County Deal proposal.

8.2 The Joint Intelligence and Strategy Unit develop a range of options setting out what types of flexibilities and specific powers we would like to see from a County Deal for Greater Lincolnshire for consideration by the Committee.

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report - Nil**