

**GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE  
JOINT STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**LEVELLING UP LINCOLNSHIRE  
3- COUNTY DEAL**

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

- 1.1 The object of this report is to update the Greater Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Oversight Committee on:
- 1) The evolving Government's devolution process.
  - 2) Greater Lincolnshire's work towards a "County Deal".

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2.1 Government Devolution Process

- 2.1.1 In England, devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government. It is important because it ensures that decisions are made closer to the local people, communities and businesses they affect.
- 2.1.2 Devolution so far has taken the route of an agreed "Devolution Deal" establishing a Combined Authority with an elected Mayor as governance for a set geographic boundary. Since the inception of this policy in 2017 there have been 10 such Mayoral Combined Authorities established.
- 2.1.3 The agreed deals have a common focus on driving local economic growth, providing for the decentralisation of powers over skills and transport policy and the creation of a 'single pot' to support local investment.
- 2.1.4 In 2019, the Government announced an English Devolution White Paper as part the Queen's Speech. More recently, the Prime Minister announced that devolution would play a part in the Government's 'levelling up agenda' and signalled his Government's intention to expand devolution across England.
- 2.1.5 Government will seek to strike new devolution deals with Counties and work with the existing combined authority

mayors to ensure they have the powers they need to support economies, create jobs and improve local services. More details regarding the formal arrangements underpinning this process are expected in December as part of the levelling up white paper.

## 2.2 “County Deals”

2.2.1 In July 2021, the Prime Minister set out the catalytic role for government and the need to empower strong local leaders by taking a more flexible approach to devolution, with new ‘County Deals’

2.2.2 New ‘County Deals’ are to take devolution beyond the largest cities, offering the rest of England the same powers metro mayors have gained over things like transport, skills and economic support.

2.2.3 County Deals will be bespoke to the needs of individual places, bringing decisions closer to people and places, potentially allowing more places to benefit from strong, high profile local champions. County Deals will give places the tools they need to pilot new ideas, create jobs, drive growth and improve public services.

2.2.4 Further detail will be set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, but Government do stress that county deals will not be one size fits all, and government will take a flexible approach to allow more places to agree devolution.

## 2.3 Journey so far

2.3.1 The political route so far has seen a development session held in the summer earlier this year attended by the districts and upper tier authorities. This subsequently led to the chief executives meeting with government officials to outline the ambition of a Greater Lincolnshire County Deal, the support it had and the geography it could cover. A letter signed by all 10 Local Authority Leaders was sent to ministers in the summer expressing a desire to work on a County Deal for a Greater Lincolnshire geography. A letter has also been sent to all MPs within Greater Lincolnshire describing the reason why and the ambition for a “County Deal”. A follow up meeting held in November and attended by both Leaders and Chief Executives further developed the thinking around such an approach.

2.3.2 Running concurrently with the above have been various lead officer groups which have drafted and then re-iterated various options to arrive at an agreed set list of “ask” bullet points from which to develop the detail behind these “asks” to Government. These “asks” will be structured around enablers and themes and reinforce Greater Lincolnshire’s differentiation as well as commonality with other similar deals.

2.3.3 To complement this activity, work has been initiated to develop a 2050 vision for Greater Lincolnshire. A small working group comprising of officer

representation from both upper tier and district authorities has been established to develop this thinking. In addition a separate paper highlights the existing and potential areas of joint work that exist between both ourselves and partner organisations. This helps to reinforce and highlight the potential that exists through this initiative.

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

- 3.1 To seize the opportunity that enhanced devolution can bring and building upon the existing strong cross boundary joint work including upper tier and district authorities it is proposed that through the GLJSOC a “County Deal” proposal is submitted to Government.
- 3.2 At present the exact nature of the criteria is still awaited through the “Levelling Up – White Paper” but in advance of the detail officers from the relevant Authorities have been working on a draft and emerging “County Deal” to enable a subsequent proposal to be submitted quickly in the new year.
- 3.3 Government have had an ongoing dialogue with areas expressing an interest in establishing a “County Deal” with positive feedback received for a Greater Lincolnshire submission covering a geographic area from the Humber to the Wash.
- 3.4 The approach being taken is to ensure that any “County Deal” ask is unique to Greater Lincolnshire and not just a generic ask to Government. To this affect we have taken a matrix approach in identifying the three core economic growth sectors that impact upon the whole of Greater Lincolnshire (Food, Ports and Logistics and Energy) and cross referenced these with enablers such as skills, infrastructure, sustainability and innovation and productivity for both public and private sectors.

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

- 4.1 Full legal analysis would be undertaken when the detail and terms of the “County Deal” are known. Proposed “asks” within the submission are based within existing legal frameworks.

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

- 5.1 The “County Deal” offers a great opportunity for a truly Greater Lincolnshire approach to both enhancing its economy and bringing decision making closer to its people.
- 5.2 At present risk is minimal and indeed demonstrating such ambition enhances investor confidence in the area.

5.3 Full risk analysis and impact assessments would be undertaken where appropriate at a later stage when more detail is known and a business case needs to be finalised with Government.

## **6. CONSULTATION/ENGAGEMENT**

6.1 Engagement has been undertaken with the three upper tier authorities and the 7 district authorities that comprise Greater Lincolnshire.

6.2 As the “County Deal” is developed further fuller consultation will take place within our business and third sector communities.

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

7.1 It is proposed that the GLJSOC assume the lead role in dialogue with Government regarding the “County Deal” submission and in response to the anticipated white paper on levelling up.

7.2 The GLJSOC will continue to oversee the progress towards a “County Deal”.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the GLJSOC support and note progress made in developing a “County Deal”.

8.2 That following and subject to further detail and bid criteria expected in the forthcoming “Levelling Up – White Paper” the GLJSOC submit a “County Deal” proposal to Government.

### **DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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