

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CASE FOR DEVOLUTION  
RESOURCING REQUIREMENTS****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the work of The City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's Economic Prosperity Committee (EPC), Chaired by Councillor Ben Bradley MP, in developing the case for a devolution deal and collaborative working.
2. To seek approval for the establishment of a small team for a 12 month fixed term period, funded through the shared National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Pool Reserve, to drive forward the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire joint working and devolution programme.

**Information****Background**

3. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils (City, County, Districts and Boroughs) have been working together to identify areas for greater collaboration and opportunities to make an even bigger difference for our residents. The national policy context is a driver for this work, with the Levelling Up White Paper expected to set out plans for further rounds of local devolution. Following the Prime Minister's Levelling Up speech on 15 July 2021, the then Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to all local authority leaders, chief executives and mayors outlining initial details of new devolution deals and seeking expressions of interest. Government is holding discussions with selected local authority areas across the Country, including Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It is expected that the Government will invite a small number of these to be "pathfinder" areas. This would mean an intense period of co-production, with the potential for a devolution deal from 1 April 2022.
4. An expression of interest was submitted to Government in September 2021 for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to be selected as one of the new devolution deal "pathfinders". Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils have subsequently worked together to put forward a devolution proposal. The "Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Case for Devolution" was approved by the EPC on 29 October 2021 and is attached as **Appendix 1**. The ambition is to:

- Attract significant inward investment, boosting economic growth and raising productivity, as well as growing the private sector
  - Raise living standards and achieve a demonstrable reduction in inequalities including in poverty, health and social care
  - Deliver high quality places to live for all residents
  - Regenerate our city and town centres, unlocking difficult sites for development
  - Tackle climate change and protect local people from its impacts including a focus on delivering cleaner air
  - Deliver better services for residents
  - Secure better outcomes and value for money for local taxpayers through public sector reform and efficiencies
  - See Nottingham and Nottinghamshire realise its true potential as a core city and county working together, restoring local pride
5. Together Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils, through the EPC, have identified the following six priority themes under the devolution programme, all supporting the core aim of changing things for the better for local people:
- Education and Skills
  - Transport
  - Environment
  - Economy and Infrastructure
  - Land and Housing
  - Youth services and support to vulnerable families and adolescents
6. Other areas of work that will be developed over the next three months include:
- Health and social care;
  - Visitor economy, heritage and culture;
  - Community safety, cohesion and reducing reoffending;
  - Public sector reform
7. Scopes are being prepared for the first six priority themes and will be developed through the EPC into outline business cases by the end of December 2021. This collaborative work will continue regardless of the outcome of discussions on devolution. In the event of a devolution

agreement being reached with Government, Nottinghamshire councils will use the EPC as the delivery vehicle to determine priorities and ensure distributed leadership across the priority themes. Specific powers would be devolved to the leaders of the upper tier councils.

8. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils met with Government officials to talk about their devolution proposal on 10 November 2021. At the time of writing, it is expected a decision on “pathfinder” areas will be announced before the end of 2021. A verbal update on the latest discussions with Government will be made at Policy Committee.
9. Work continues at pace, with the priorities including:
  - Developing the detailed proposals that will be required for a devolution deal with sponsorship from Leaders and leadership from Chief Executives
  - Creating an implementation plan for how we would deliver an agreed deal
  - Ensuring the necessary governance arrangements are in place and fit for purpose
  - Communications and engagement of delivery partners and stakeholders
  - Continued engagement with central government to make our case for change
  - Mapping organisational strengths and challenges and existing partnerships
  - Engaging with wider partners through the Chief Officers Forum.

### Resourcing Proposals

10. Collaborative working at this scale will require resources. On 29 October 2021, the EPC approved the establishment of a dedicated programme team to drive forward the work. The EPC approved an annual budget of £450,000 for the programme, funded through the shared NNDR pool. The EPC agreed that Nottinghamshire County Council should be asked to act as the host organisation and be the employing body. As a consequence, approval is requested to establish this new team as set out in paragraph 11.
11. The Programme Team will comprise the following roles, established initially for 12 months. The job descriptions and grades of the recently reviewed central programme and projects team will be utilised, because they capture the skills, knowledge and experience needed for this collaborative working.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Grade</b>
1x Programme Manager	Hay Band D
1x Senior Communications Officer	Hay Band C
4x Project Officers	Band A
2x Business Support Administrator	NJE Grade 2

The team is a resource which will be deployed under the strategic direction of the EPC in order to drive collaborative working and devolution. For the purposes of day to day management, the team will report to the newly appointed Group Manager, Transformation and Change. The exception to this will be the Senior Communications Officer post, which will report to the Head of Communications and Marketing. Close links would be maintained between the programme team and the dedicated communications post.

12. The estimated cost of the programme team per annum is £310,000.

<b>Resource</b>	<b>£</b>
Programme Team	310,000
Programme Budget	100,000
Equipment, Travel and Subsistence	10,000
Communications Budget	30,000
<b>Total Programme Budget per annum</b>	<b>450,000</b>

13. The costs of delivering the programme will be shared across Councils using the following split:

<b>Council</b>	<b>£</b>
County Council 40% split	180,000
District and Borough Councils 60% split	270,000 (38,571 per council)

14. The programme will be funded from the Nottinghamshire Councils shared NNDR Rates Pool. It is estimated that posts could be filled from January 2022 at the earliest, with the total programme spend for this financial year estimated as £150,000. This assumes three months' of salary costs and six months' budget provision October 2021 to March 2022.

15. Nottingham City Council has agreed to provide in kind contributions, as the City Council is not part of the Nottinghamshire Councils Rates Pool.

16. These resourcing proposals seek to provide a programme delivery mechanism specifically aimed at achieving better outcomes for local people and places across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The new team would deliver the following:

- Accelerating and supporting the implementation of business cases, delivery plans and proposals
- Further extend and deepen engagement and involvement of Elected Members, senior managers and partner organisations through agreed implementation and delivery proposals
- Develop appropriate and strong governance arrangements through a review of the EPC
- Develop and deliver an agreed clear communications strategy

- Build a broader longer term delivery programme to meet agreed ambitions
- Build the foundations for a devolution deal.

17. To ensure best use of resources we also propose to:

- Utilise existing partnership groups
- Develop and strengthen expertise of existing staff where possible through use of secondments
- Minimise the use of external consultants, relying on the wealth of existing expertise across partners, wherever possible.

18. The programme has the potential to deliver significant savings and efficiencies in the future and these will be scoped as the programme progresses.

19. These resourcing proposals represent the anticipated requirements over the next twelve months. Delivering on a successful devolution deal and discharging additional powers to deliver benefits to local people will, however, be a complex undertaking. Resource requirements will continue to be reviewed by the programme team and any additional resource requirements requested from the appropriate committee.

### **Other Options Considered**

20. Do Nothing - Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Councils could continue with current resourcing levels. However, this option is not sustainable in the short and medium term because resources and capacity to deliver identified programmes of work are not sufficient. This option was therefore rejected as all councils have agreed to progress joint working at pace. Early collaborative work and preparation for a devolution deal has stretched existing resources and demonstrates the need for additional capacity.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

21. To ensure that sufficient resource is made available to effectively drive forward ambitious joint working proposals. Agreeing to fund additional resource will give Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils collectively the best chance of success in achieving the shared ambitions set out at paragraph 4 and in Appendix 1.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

22. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **Financial Implications**

23. The financial implications are detailed in paragraphs 10 and 12 to 14. The 29 October 2021 EPC meeting agreed to resource a programme team and budget at a cost of up to £150,000 in 2021/22 and £450,000 over the full 12 month period. This will be funded through the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Pool Reserve, which is assessed each December. An in kind contribution will be made by Nottingham City Council.

## **Human Resources Implications**

24. Seven Full Time Equivalent fixed term roles would be created and hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council, utilising existing job descriptions from the centralised Projects and Programmes team. The roles will initially be filled on a secondment basis with any vacancies being subject to the normal agreed recruitment process.

25. Due to the need to demonstrate to the Government that Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Councils can deliver at pace, the jobs will be advertised as expressions of interest across Nottinghamshire public service agencies as soon as possible. A caveat will be added that progression to interview stage is dependent on Policy Committee approval to establish the posts. Subject to Policy Committee approval, interviews are planned for December 2021 to enable appointments to be made as soon as possible.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty implications**

26. The recruitment to the new roles will be carried out in accordance with Nottinghamshire County Council's employment and equalities policies.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

It is recommended that Committee:

Approves the establishment of the staffing structure changes and seven FTE posts (detailed within the report at paragraphs 11 and 24) for an initial period of twelve months, the costs of which will be funded through Nottinghamshire's shared NNDR Pool Reserve

**Councillor Ben Bradley MP**  
**Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**  
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## **Constitutional Comments [KK 18/11/2021]**

The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Policy Committee.

## **Financial Comments [RWK 18/11/2021]**

The report proposes the creation of a programme team and budget to support partnership working and the development of devolution proposals in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire at an estimated cost of £450,000 for a 12-month period. These costs will be funded from the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Pool Reserve.

## **HR Comments (GME 17/11/21)**

The use of secondments is an effective and expedient way to fill these time sensitive fixed term roles. Selection will be in accordance with the agreed recruitment policy and procedures of Nottinghamshire County Council.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Nottinghamshire County Council Press Release [“Devolution vision for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire”](#) 21 October 2021
- [“Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Case for Devolution”](#), The City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee 29 October 2021
- [“Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Case for Devolution – Resourcing Requirements”](#), The City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee 29 October 2021
- Letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government dated 15 July 2021: [https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/write/150721\\_SoS\\_MHCLG\\_letter\\_-\\_County\\_Deals.pdf](https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/write/150721_SoS_MHCLG_letter_-_County_Deals.pdf)

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All