

29 October 2021**Agenda Item: 5****REPORT OF THE LEADER OF NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CASE FOR DEVOLUTION
RESOURCING REQUIREMENTS****Purpose of the Report**

1. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils are exploring the potential of a devolution deal and greater joint working. The ambition is to deliver better services for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire residents and make a demonstrable difference to the lives of city and county residents. This report summarises work to date and highlights the resourcing requirements needed to deliver at pace on this programme of work.

InformationBackground

2. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils 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 has acted as a driver for these discussions, with the Levelling Up White Paper due to be published later this year. The White Paper presents an opportunity to reset the relationship between central and local government and put councils at the heart of delivering the Government's programme to improve opportunities in all parts of the country, including the opportunity for new devolution deals. Following the Prime Minister's Levelling Up speech on 15 July 2021, the then Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote on the same day to all local authority leaders, chief executives and mayors outlining initial details of new devolution deals. Government are currently in discussions with local authorities across the country and it is expected that the government will invite a small number of these to be pilot "pathfinder" areas.
3. Early discussions between Nottingham and Nottinghamshire councils have been positive with the following progress made to date:
 - 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";
 - We are developing our ask to government, offer and benefits;

- A mapping exercise is underway on the needs of each area and the interface with other programmes of work;
 - Initial legal advice has been received that suggests that the Economic Prosperity Committee (EPC), subject to reform and agreement on key issues, may be capable of acting as a partnership vehicle for future devolution and joint working discussions;
 - Early work has started on the potential model for programme management, leadership and delivery.
4. Whilst much progress has been made, there is a significant amount of work to progress 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;
 - Mapping, communications and engagement of delivery partners and stakeholders;
 - Continued engagement with central government to make our case for change.
5. The ability to progress joint working proposals is currently limited due to a lack of capacity. In recognition of this, the complexity of many of the issues set out above, and the fact that agreed ways forward will take time to both agree and deliver, it is proposed that a new programme team should be established to drive forward the work programme.

Resourcing Proposals

6. Proposals to adequately resource ambitions and plans, initially for a twelve month period, are set out below and create the following programme resource:
- Programme team – comprising a combination of team members to facilitate delivery;
 - Programme budget – funding to support the buy in of specialist expertise and support the operation of the EPC and other associated costs;
 - Communications budget – funding to support branding, design, campaigns and social media activity;
 - Equipment, travel and subsistence – to support activities of the programme team;
 - Accommodation – in kind support from host agency/agencies.
7. Proposals for the Programme Team include the creation of the following roles on a 12 month fixed term basis. The job descriptions and grades of the recently reviewed central programme and projects team will be utilised and the posts filled initially on a secondment basis:
- 1 x Hay Band D Programme Manager
 - 4 x Hay Band A Project Officers
 - 1 x Hay Band C Senior Communications Officer
 - 1 X NJE Grade 2 Business Support Administrator.
8. 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 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 reform of the EPC;
- Develop and deliver an agreed clear communications strategy;
- Build a broader longer term delivery programme to meet agreed ambitions.

9. The estimated total cost of taking forward resourcing proposals per annum is £450,000.

Resource	£
Programme Team	310,000
Programme Budget	100,000
Equipment, Travel and Subsistence	10,000
Communications Budget	30,000
Total	450,000

10. Subject to approval of proposals, the costs of preparing for and taking forward proposals, could be shared across Councils using the following split:

Council	£
County Council 40% split	180,000
District and Borough Councils 60% split	270,000 (38,571 per council if seven councils) (45,000 per council if six councils) (54,000 per council if five councils)

11. It is proposed to fund the programme from the Nottinghamshire Councils Rates Pool. £200,000 has already been agreed from the 2021/22 pool to provide start-up funding. It is estimated that posts could be filled from January 2022 at the earliest, with the total 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.

12. Nottingham City Council are currently exploring options for in kind contributions, as they are not part of the Nottinghamshire Councils Rates Pool.

13. It is recognised that these proposals have a significant financial cost. 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.

14. The programme does provide the potential to deliver significant savings and efficiencies in the future and these will be scoped as the programme progresses.
15. Whilst the new team would work to the direction of all Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Councils, it is proposed that Nottinghamshire County Council would act as the host organisation and employing body and the team will report to the newly appointed Group Manager, Transformation and Change.
16. These resourcing proposals represent the anticipated requirements over the next twelve months. However, as proposals are developed, it may be necessary to review arrangements to ensure they are still fit for purpose.
17. If approved, it is expected that it could be January 2022 at the earliest before the new team is in place. There is a significant amount of work that will need to be progressed ahead of this. Given the importance of this programme of work, it is suggested that Leaders and Chief Executives, supported by Lead Officers from across the range of participating Councils, sponsor identified thematic programmes of work. This arrangement will continue once the programme team is in place. Existing partnership groups are in the process of being mapped to identify what resource is available in this interim period to drive progress.

Other Options Considered

18. 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 explore joint working as a priority and the programme would not be able to continue to deliver at pace.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

19. 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 these shared ambitions:
 - Delivering on the Levelling Up agenda with economic growth boosted alongside a demonstrable reduction in inequalities including in poverty, health, and social care;
 - Attracting significant inward investment ;
 - Delivering high quality places to live for all residents;
 - Regenerating our city and town centres and unlocking difficult sites for development;
 - Tackling climate change and protecting local people from its impacts;
 - Achieving optimum public value for people and places through public sector reform, securing better outcomes and value for money for residents and businesses.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. 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

21. The financial implications are detailed in paragraphs 10 to 15. The report is seeking approval 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 would be funded through the National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Pool Reserve, which is assessed each December. An in kind contribution is being explored by Nottingham City Council.

Human Resources Implications

22. Seven fixed term roles would be created hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council and 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 recruitment process.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

23. 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:

- 1) Approve proposals to establish a cross-council team to support partnership working and the development of devolution proposals in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
- 2) Approve the proposed structure for the team enclosed in this report and associated spend of £450,000 on an annual basis, funded through the NNDR Pool Reserve subject to Nottinghamshire County Council's relevant service committee's approval to establish the posts and the staffing structure changes set out in this report.
- 3) Endorses proposals for Nottinghamshire County Council to act as the host organisation and employing body for the new team and recommends these proposals to Nottinghamshire County Council's relevant service committee for approval.

Councillor Ben Bradley MP
Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:
Anthony May, Chief Executive, Nottinghamshire County Council Tel: 0115 9773582**

Constitutional Comments (SSR 20.10.2021)

24. The recommendations set out in this report falls within the scope of the terms of reference for the City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee under its constitution. Approvals to establish posts and amend Nottinghamshire County Council's staffing structures are matter which fall within the scope of decisions that may be made by the Council's relevant service committee.

Financial Comments (RWK 20/10/2021)

25. 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 20/10/21]) The hosting arrangement utilising fixed term secondments is in line with previous interim structures such as the Development Corporation. It enables the flexibility required whilst the proposals are developed and the decision taken regarding a devolution deal. This model may require further consideration should the 12 month fixed term roles be extended to reflect more specialist work required in this area. If this is the case, the extended roles may need to be reviewed and evaluated using the existing policies and procedures of the Council.

27. The detailed terms of the secondment arrangements will be discussed and agreed with the successful candidates at the time of appointment.

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.

- 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

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All