



Report to Executive

Meeting Date – 17th September 2024
Key Decision – No
Public/Private – Public

Portfolio – Leader
Directorate – Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport
Report Author – Darren Crossley

Title – Cumbria Devolution – Submission of an Expression of Interest

1. Summary

- 1.1 Executive are asked to consider a delegation to the Leader concerning a decision to submit an expression of interest to Government concerning a developing discussion between Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils and Government on combined authority devolution.
- 1.2 In exercising this delegation, the Leader will be deciding on whether to express an interest for further discussions on the development of such a deal. Any potential future deal offered by Government would require consultation and formal decision making to follow, no substantial decision is to be made at this stage by the Leader.

2. Recommendations

Executive is recommended to:

- 2.1 Delegate to the Leader the decision on whether to respond to Government and submit an expression of interest regarding a potential future devolution deal for Cumbria.

Tracking

Executive:	17 th September 2024
Scrutiny:	N/A
Council:	N/A

3. Background:

- 3.1 Following the general election in July 2024, Local Authorities in Cumbria received a letter from the Deputy Prime Minister asking each Local Authority to consider submitting an 'expression of interest' to work with the Government on this next wave of devolution. This expression of interest (EOI) must be submitted before 30th September 2024.
- 3.2 The Government EOI form is focused on understanding the Council's preferred geography for devolution and initial views on adopting the mayoral model. The Government is due to publish a new devolution framework that will precisely define the powers and flexibilities available to areas entering into a devolution agreement. As such, it is recognised that this needs to be fully understood by local areas before making any final decision.
- 3.3 Submission of an expression of interest is not a binding decision or commitment to devolution by the Council. Indeed, at this stage there is no detail of what the Government proposes to offer Councils or how the funding arrangements would work. In this respect any expression of interest would be simply to keep the Council's options open to understand more about the governance and funding arrangements for the chosen area before making any formal decisions.
- 3.4 It is expected that the more detail will emerge in the English Devolution Bill which was referenced in the King's Speech.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council agree and submit a final EOI for the potential future Cumbria devolution deal.

5. Alternative options considered.

- 5.1 None, given the key dates and requirements of the EOI.

6. Conclusions and reasons for the recommendations

- 6.1 To ensure the Council has the appropriate delegations to reach a decision.

Implications:

Contribution to the Cumberland Plan Priorities -

The decision to submit an EOI is an early step towards a more informed and detail discussion of the merits of working towards a Cumbria devolution deal. At this early stage, the decision is not considered to make a material contribution to the Cumberland Plan priorities.

Relevant Risks -

The decision to submit an EOI is not considered to bring a significant risk that would not need to be considered in this report.

Consultation / Engagement -

Consultation with the Executive has already taken place.

Legal – This is a decision which can be properly taken by the Executive, as it involves merely an expression of interest in devolution. Should a devolution deal be progressed further formal decision making will be required. Advice will be provided at the appropriate time.

Finance – The decision to submit an EOI does not incur any financial commitments or implications

Information Governance –

No information governance implications are anticipated from this report.

Impact Assessments –

Have you screened the decision for impacts using the Impact Assessment?

If you have not screened the decision using the Impact Assessment, please explain your reason.

The decision to submit an EOI in this process is not felt significant enough to require an impact assessment. Further reports and any future decisions regarding any form of devolution deal will require a full impact assessment.

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Background papers:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

Appendices attached to report:

None

Background Documents

[Letter from the Deputy Prime Minister: The next steps to devolution \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

