

County Deal Advisory Board

Background

Through the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper on the 2 February 2022, local authority partners within Devon, Plymouth and Torbay have been offered an opportunity to negotiate a new style of devolution deal ('County Deal') for the area.

Government has indicated through its initial discussions with partner authorities that it is seeking to take forward negotiations on County Deals over the next six months, with the intention to have the first group of pilot deals agreed by Winter 2022. This may include shadow arrangements around governance and delivery whilst new legislation travels through parliament.

Torbay Council will work with our upper tier neighbours to develop a County Deal prospectus that provides further opportunities to meet our ambition of a thriving Torbay.

An officer working group has been established to make proposals to the Council's political and officer leadership on the projects, finances and powers that are critical to our objectives within any future County Deal.

A member advisory board will provide political oversight as the County Deal prospectus is developed.

Terms of Reference

1. To review the officer proposals on the projects, finances and powers that should be included within the County Deal prospectus (taking account of the Community and Corporate Plan, Policy Framework and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment).
2. To receive regular updates on the discussions being held across the upper tier authorities as the Devolution Deal prospectus is developed.
3. To receive regular updates on the progress of negotiations with government towards a County Deal.
4. To make any recommendations to the appropriate Torbay Council decision maker on points 1, 2 and 3 above.

Principles

1. A Devolution Deal for Devon, Plymouth and Torbay will not affect the sovereignty of Torbay Council in terms of existing services and investment decisions and will not involve any form of Local Government Reorganisation for Devon and its districts.
2. There are no plans for a Directly Elected Mayor.
3. A Deal will focus on drawing down new powers, funding and flexibilities to the area.

4. The overall package of new powers, functions, and management of funding streams must deliver a net benefit for Torbay Council and for the Deal area as a whole.
5. There will be some elements of the Deal that do not necessarily have any direct benefit for Torbay, but which may be a priority for other parts of the Deal geography, and vice versa.
6. Where there is a clear case for doing so, Torbay Council will align with neighbouring councils in the Deal area, and with Cornwall if appropriate, to deliver new functions at an appropriate scale.
7. The decision to proceed with the Deal and to establish a new Combined Authority will be a Council decision.
8. The Leader of the Council will represent the Council on the new Combined Authority set up to manage the Deal.
9. No current functions of Torbay Council or decision-making that sits with the Council will be transferred to the new Combined Authority unless there has been a full cost benefit appraisal, followed by a clear Council mandate.
10. The Deal negotiation process will be open and transparent, with regular communications to Members and officers.

Membership

Five members of the Council in accordance with the political balance requirements

Conservative (2):

Liberal Democrat (2):

Independent Group (1):

Attendance by other members

The advisory board will be classed as a working party and therefore meetings of the board will be open for all members of the Council to attend.

This will be especially encouraged on those occasions when updates of the discussions with partner authorities and negotiations with Government are provided. This will reduce the need for separate all member briefings thereby making best use of resources.