

Record of Decisions

Devon, Plymouth and Torbay County Deal - Current position and appointment of Advisory Board

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 22 March 2022.

Decision

- 1) That a County Deal Advisory Board be established in accordance with the terms of reference as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report; and
- 2) That the Chief Executive and Divisional Director – Environment, Economy and Infrastructure provide regular updates as negotiations progress with the Government towards a County Deal with any final decision being subject to formal agreement by lead authorities later in 2022/2023.

Reason for the Decision

To ensure that all members are kept informed and have an opportunity to influence the Torbay Council position within the County Deal discussions and negotiations.

Implementation

The decision in respect of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay County Deal – Current position and appointment of Advisory Board will come into force immediately as the decision maker has decided that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would prejudice the Public' and Council's interest. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator was consulted on 9 March 2022.

Information

The Levelling Up White Paper identified the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay area as one of the Government's 10 proposed 'County Deal' pilots. As a pilot area, there was the opportunity to negotiate a new style County Deal with Government over the next few months. The deal would focus upon agreeing devolution of a range of new powers and funding opportunities in return for the establishment of strengthened governance between the local authority partners involved.

Initial discussions with Government suggested it was seeking to advance negotiations with the intention that the first round of County Deal pilots would be in place by late 2022/early 2023.

For its part, Government was keen to establish a joint work programme with pilot areas and move forward County Deal arrangements at pace. This included bringing together local authority and Government colleagues around core themes, with a preference to have the first outline deals completed by early summer if possible.

At the meeting Councillor Steve Darling proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion, that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

The alternative options were considered and discounted:

- The discussions and negotiations could continue with the Leader of the Council continuing to hold discussions with the Leaders of Devon County and Plymouth City Councils. However, it is felt that the establishment of an Advisory Board provides a framework to ensure that all members of Torbay Council are able to provide advice and guidance throughout the negotiations. This formal framework will also be used to keep all members briefed.
- Ultimately, Torbay Council could determine to not be involved in the negotiations around a Devon, Plymouth and Torbay County Deal but this would have significant risks to the organisation, not least the ability to secure additional powers, flexibilities and funding to assist in meeting our ambitions as well as the reputational damage.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

No

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

Published

25 March 2022

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet