

Subject:	Update on Greater Brighton Devolution Bid		
Date of Meeting:	31 January 2017		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board		
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LA(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 On 18 October 2016, the Greater Brighton Economic Board ('the Board') asked the Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board ('the Officer Board') to progress the City Region's devolution bid to secure a non-mayoral devolution deal that supports the economic growth of the City Region.
- 1.2 This report provides the Board with the revised Greater Brighton Devolution Proposition document ('the Proposition document'), developed in response to the Board's instruction. The Proposition document reflects the work undertaken on developing Greater Brighton's devolution proposals since the 2016 Ministerial challenge session; it reasserts the City Region's case for devolution and sets the scope for future negotiations with Government.
- 1.3 The Proposition document clearly articulates the City Region's priorities and how Government can support the delivery of these. It has been written to enable further discussions with Government, with a view to agreeing either a Devolution Deal; a further City Deal; or to provide a clear position document that can positively respond to any emerging changes in Government's economic growth policy, such as the development of the Industrial Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 The Board is asked to approve the Proposition document, which is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Board is asked to permit the Officer Board to recommence negotiations with Government.
- 2.3 The Board is asked to delegate authority to the Officer Board to 'buy-in' a variety of specialist support, to both continue to build the evidence base for the City Region's Proposition and to progress priority pieces of work as outlined in section 3.12 of this report. This will initially be funded from within the Board's existing budget but further requests for funding may be made in the future if required.

3. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Greater Brighton Devolution Prospectus, Platforms for Productivity, was submitted to the then Secretary of State for the Department for Communities & Local (DCLG) Government on 04 September 2015. The Prospectus was formally approved by the Board on 13 October 2015.
- 3.2 In total, 37 devolution proposals from across the Country were submitted to Government on 04 September 2015.
- 3.3 On 12 October 2015, the Board received a letter from the then Secretary of State for the DCLG inviting the City Region to a meeting to discuss the proposals. Members of the Board subsequently 'pitched' these to Baroness Williams of Trafford, the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the DCLG, on 14 January 2016.
- 3.4 The proposals were well received and members of the Officer Board consequently attended a number of meetings with Cities & Local Growth Unit and other Government officials (both in January 2016 and in June 2016), to obtain feedback on the specifics of the proposals. A number of task and finish groups were also convened to work-up the proposals, to get the City Region to "deal territory".
- 3.5 At its meeting on 18 October 2016, the Board requested that the Officer Board increase the pace of its work on devolution. This had slowed during the summer months, due both to changes in Government following the EU Referendum and a lack of officer capacity as the recruitment process for the Greater Brighton Policy & Projects Manager post had been unsuccessful.
- 3.6 On 21 November 2016, Simpson Consulting Ltd and The Reeve Partnership Ltd were appointed on a consultancy basis to develop the Proposition document. This work encompassed: a review of the work undertaken to date; refinement of the City Region's 'asks' and 'offers' in line with Government feedback and policy changes and to reflect the passage of time, and; the collation of the supporting evidence developed by the task and finish groups.
- 3.7 The Proposition document is attached as Appendix 1. Wherever possible, efforts have been made to align the Greater Brighton Proposition document with that of the Three Southern Counties.
- 3.8 It should be noted that, barring Cornwall, all 12 existing devolution deals (3 of which have subsequently broken down) have been agreed on the basis that the regions introduce a specific governance arrangement – a Mayoral Combined Authority. Government has a clear 'menu' of core powers that it will devolve to regions offering this governance arrangement, which is summarised in Appendix 2. Government's position on regions offering alternative models of governance – Economic Prosperity Boards, Joint Committees and Combined Authorities – is currently unclear.
- 3.9 No new Devolution Deals were agreed as part of the Autumn Statement 2016. Instead, new borrowing powers were granted to Mayoral Combined Authorities in England with existing Devolution Deals as well as a commitment made to discuss the devolution of further powers to these areas. Government recommitted to

their City Deal's with Swansea, Edinburgh, North Wales and Tay Cities and announced that it would be beginning negotiations on a City Deal for Stirling. This has led some commentators to surmise that the new Government's enthusiasm for the "Devolution agenda" does not match that of its predecessor, with a greater focus upon the development of the Industrial Strategy.

3.10 The Proposition document clearly articulates the City Region's priorities and how Government can support the delivery of these. As a result of the possibility of a change in Government focus, the Proposition document has been written to enable further discussions with Government to either agree a Devolution Deal, a further City Deal or to provide a clear position document that can positively respond to any emerging changes in Government's growth policy, such as the development of the Industrial Strategy.

3.11 The City Region is already progressing a wealth of work towards the achievement of its economic growth priorities. Whilst there is no doubt that the City Region can achieve more with a Devolution Deal, a number of the 'offers' made in the Proposition document can continue to be taken forward whilst a deal is being negotiated:

- Development of a non-statutory spatial framework through the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board, building on the City Region's work to address housing issues in anticipation of the Government's intention to intervene, if necessary, in local housing markets that is expected to be set out in the Housing & Planning White Paper (anticipated to be released Spring 2017).
- Development of an overarching Transport Strategy through the Shadow Transport for the South East Sub National Transport Body.
- Continued delivery of the Greater Brighton Investment Programme to unlock new housing, infrastructure, employment space and jobs.
- Continued development of business cases to secure Growth Deal and other funding as and when the opportunities arise, including for new facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and transport users to build effective local transport networks as well as major infrastructure and regeneration projects.
- Delivery of the Greater Brighton One Public Estate Programme, overseen by the Greater Brighton Strategic Property Board.
- Enhancement of the City Region's business support offer through the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership's latest European Regional Development Fund call launched in December 2016 and totalling £6m.
- Completion of the next phase of the City Region's Smart Growth research, to develop a Smart Growth Strategy that focuses on more intensive innovation support for firms in high growth, high productivity sectors.
- Increased working with the Department for International Trade to both support businesses to exploit opportunities to export within and beyond Europe and to develop an inward investment strategy for the City Region.
- Development of a local Digital Connectivity Delivery Plan and supporting the growth the creative Digital and IT cluster in partnership with the Digital Catapult Centre Brighton.

- Development of the City Region’s approach to apprenticeships and skills, including a focus on STEM supply and demand.
- Hosting the British Science Festival 2017, Europe’s largest and longest-established science event.

3.12 It is proposed that the remainder of the budget originally allocated to the Greater Brighton Policy & Projects Manager post and the monies earmarked in the 2016/17 budget to procure specialist support (£41,424 and £40,000 respectively) be used to both further develop the City Region’s evidence base and progress the priority work that is non-devolution dependent. This will include the ‘buying-in’ of consultancy services as required. A full report on the Board’s budget position will be presented to the Board at its next meeting, on 25 April 2017.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Greater Brighton remains committed to developing its devolution proposals, so as not to become disadvantaged in terms of its powers and funding in the future. At the same time, the Board will continue to demonstrate its ability to deliver by taking forward work on priority areas that are non-devolution dependent.

4.2 The Proposition document, combined with the successful work programme, places the Board in a strong position to engage with Government on a range of policy issues, including devolution. This fortifies the Board’s position as a legitimate voice for the City Region and enables it to take advantage of the new opportunities that may emerge.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 There is a requirement to appoint a variety of specialist support, to both continue to build the evidence base for the City Region’s devolution Proposition and also to progress priority pieces of ongoing work that are not reliant upon the outcome of the devolution bid. This will initially be funded from within the Board’s existing budget. An update on the Board’s current budget and spend will be presented to the next Board meeting on 25 April 2017.

The City Region’s devolution bid will commit Greater Brighton to deliver a number of initiatives such as new housing, infrastructure and jobs through a number of different schemes some of which can be progressed pending the outcome of the devolution bid and are detailed at paragraph 3.11. These initiatives will be addressed in separate business cases and update reports will be presented to the Greater Brighton Economic Board in due course.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen, Principal Accountant
Date: 18 January 2017*

Legal Implications:

5.2 The Greater Brighton Devolution Proposition Document refers to the possibility of progressing towards a combined authority. The legal and governance

implications of such a step would need to be the subject of detailed consideration.

- 5.3 A combined authority is a separate body corporate. The scope of functions and powers will depend on the specific powers granted to that authority under the establishing order made by the Secretary of State. The combined authority will need to determine its own constitutional rules and scheme of delegation. A combined authority must have at least one overview and scrutiny committee and one audit committee.
- 5.4 There are a number of steps in the process of creating a combined authority. The process usually takes 12 to 18 months. These include a governance review to explore whether the combined authority model would be likely to improve the exercise of statutory functions in relation to the review area, the preparation and publication of a combined authority scheme, public consultation and consideration by the Secretary of State.

*Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland
Head of Commercial Law BHCC Date: 16/01/17*

Equalities Implications:

- 6.3 None. Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for individual policy proposals/projects as these are further developed and implemented.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.4 None.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 6.5 None.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Greater Brighton Devolution Proposition Document (January 2017)
2. Appendix 2: Devolution Deal's 'Menu' (as summarised in the House of Commons Library Brief Paper *Devolution to Local Government in England* (number 07029, 23 November 2016))

Background Documents

None.

