

Update on “Devolution Deal to Delivery”

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides an update on progress on the “Devolution Deal to Delivery” project, which has been commissioned to look at the lessons that can be learnt from areas that have successfully negotiated devolution deals, and to develop resources to assist areas that might seek to secure a future devolution deal. Following a request from Lead Members, Shared Intelligence, the consultants commissioned to deliver this work, will attend the meeting.

Recommendation/s

That Members:

1. Note the update in the report.

Action/s

1. Officers to continue to work with Shared Intelligence on the outstanding areas of work in the project, including deep dives.
2. Officers to organise a workshop setting out the finding of the project.

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Update on “Devolution Deal to Delivery”

Background

1. Shared Intelligence have been commissioned to carry out research into the devolution process in England, looking at the lessons that can be learnt from areas that have successfully negotiated devolution deals and in some cases established new combined authorities.
2. This project aims to develop a suite of practical advice, learning tools, top tips and short case studies to guide local areas through the process of reaching a devolution deal and realising the potential of that deal. It will also identify potential support needs for emerging and existing devolution deal areas. The project is due to complete in early April and a representative from Shared Intelligence will attend the Board and provide more details on project progress.

Issues

3. To date, Shared Intelligence have carried out 34 interviews between December and February. 21 of these interviews were with combined authorities, their constituent authorities and partners. This has included interviews with officers, councillors and representatives from two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and one university. 13 of these interviews were with non-combined authorities, again encompassing both council officers and councillors and representatives from an LEP, HM Treasury (HMT), the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Homes England.
4. These interviews covered a wide range of topics including questions about existing devolution deals, structures, strategies, ways of working, perspectives on the experience in different areas of the establishment and operation of the combined authority and the negotiation and delivery to date of the devolution deal, and possible areas for learning.
5. Shared Intelligence have also carried out desk research into each of the combined authorities. This work looks at:
 - a. The composition of the combined authority, including membership, portfolio holders and voting arrangements
 - b. Other aspects of political governance, including boards, sub-groups and advisory bodies
 - c. Relationships with partners including LEPs, the NHS and business.
 - d. The groups bringing together officers from the combined authority and constituent councils.
 - e. The combined authority officer structure

- f. The area and geography of the combined authority, including the number of councils and population of the area
6. Shared Intelligence are now in the process of setting up deep dives into five combined authority areas. These deep dives will cover: the ambitions, devolved resources, and devolved powers of each devolution agreement; the functions of the devolution deal; and the impact of the devolution deal.
7. The deep dives will be developed initially through collecting core materials from websites, interview notes, the published devolutions deals, and other published reports and committee papers. This work will be supplemented through a group discussion with Combined Authority officers, interviews with a council leader from within the Combined Authority area and representatives from partners and/or local stakeholders such as a university or CCG. If possible, the mayor of each Combined Authority in a deep dive area will also be interviewed.
8. Shared Intelligence have also set up a Sounding Board made up of key stakeholders to steer the final product. This includes, Cllr Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council and Vice Chair of the People Board.
9. The project, which is expected to finish in April, will deliver a number of resources to assist local areas seeking to secure a devolution deal. These resources will include a suite of learning tools, case studies and guides on how to achieve a successful devolution deal and how to put it into practice. These will be available to officers and councillors and we will seek to hold a workshop to further share learning from the project.

Implications for Wales

10. This project is specifically looking at devolution deals in England, but LGA officers remain in contact with colleagues from the WLGA and other stakeholders to explore areas of shared interest.

Financial Implications

11. Any further work on this area will be met from the LGA's existing programme budget.

Next steps

12. Work will continue on the deep dives in the coming weeks, and the Sounding Board will meet twice to reflect on the work to date and steer it going forward.
13. Members may wish to consider whether there are any additional areas of combined authority governance that Shared Intelligence should consider during the next stages of

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the project, and if there are any topics not so far looked at which should be included in the deep dive interviews.