

Devolution Priority Programme

Executive Summary

Wiltshire Council has been invited to make a submission from councils in the 'Heart of Wessex' to join the Devolution Priority Programme. A letter from leaders of the relevant councils to the Minister has been requested by 10 January 2025. It is the intention for the Leader of the council to make a submission with fellow Leaders in the Heart of Wessex seeking inclusion in the Devolution Priority Programme.

The submission of such a letter would be an executive decision and is being progressed through a single member decision report in accordance with Protocol 5 of the Constitution. However, the Leader is seeking the views of Full Council before confirming any decision.

Proposals

That Full Council supports the intention of the Leader to write to the relevant Minister seeking inclusion in the Devolution Priority Programme on the basis of the attached single member decision report.

Reason for Proposals

It is the view of the council leaders involved that, with a population of approximately 1.5 million, the Heart of Wessex presents a realistic and ambitious offer which can redefine local decision-making and partnership across the patch, offering the Government an opportunity to showcase what devolution can offer to the region and to the wider UK. The Heart of Wessex has real strengths in sectors such as defence, digital, life sciences and clean energy, and devolution will help ensure the success of these sectors in kickstarting economic growth, making Britain a clean energy superpower and breaking down barriers to opportunity.

The provision of additional powers and funding through participation in the Devolution Priority Programme and the rapid establishment of a Mayoral Strategic Authority offers the opportunity to deliver our shared priorities and improve the lives of local residents.

Lucy Townsend
Chief Executive