

DECISION-MAKER:	Cabinet
SUBJECT:	Devolution Priority Programme – Response to Government consultation on establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight
DATE OF DECISION:	25 th March 2025
REPORT OF:	COUNCILLOR LORNA FIELKER LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY		
N/A		
BRIEF SUMMARY		
<p>Following confirmation of Hampshire and the Solent’s participation in the Devolution Priority Programme the Government launched a public consultation on their proposal to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight.</p> <p>This report seeks Cabinet approval for Southampton City Council’s response to the Government consultation as set out at Appendix 1.</p>		
RECOMMENDATIONS:		
	(i)	Agree the proposed response, set out at Appendix 1, to the Government’s consultation on establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight, is submitted on behalf of Southampton City Council.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS		
1	The establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight would be a major change to regional governance. It will bring significant opportunities for Southampton by devolving funding and responsibilities from central government to a more local level.	
2	The proposed response sets out a summary of the key points of impact for Southampton and highlights areas where we would welcome further consideration by Government.	

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
3	The council could choose not to respond to the consultation however this would limit Southampton City Council's opportunity to express its view on the proposed Mayoral Combined County Authority.
4	An alternative response, deviating from the text at Appendix 1 could be provided to the consultation if Cabinet were so minded however this would need to be agreed by the consultation deadline on 13 th April 2025
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
5	The English Devolution White Paper was published by Government in December 2024 setting out the ambition to establish devolved 'strategic authorities' across the whole of England.
6	On 5 February the Deputy Prime Minister confirmed that Hampshire and the Solent have been selected as one of six areas to join the Government's Devolution Priority Programme (DPP).
7	The DPP is designed to fast-track delivery of devolution arrangements for the region by establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Hampshire and the Solent, with elections for the first regional Mayor expected to be held in May 2026.
8	<p>The DPP announcement was followed by the launch of a public consultation on the proposal to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight.</p> <p>This consultation does not cover proposals for the reorganisation of existing councils, this is a separate process.</p>
9	The consultation runs until 13 th April 2025 and includes online, hard copy and in person consultation response options.
10	<p>To inform the consultation, Government have published a consultation document which sets out a summary of the proposals including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background • Proposed institution, governance and decision making arrangements • What powers would be available • What this means for Hampshire and the Solent • Consultation questions • Next steps <p>A copy of the consultation document is included as Members Room Document 1.</p>
11	<p>Following the consultation, the Secretary of State will consider the responses before deciding whether to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Hampshire and the Solent.</p> <p>If the Secretary of State decides to proceed, provided the constituent councils consent, the necessary secondary legislation will be laid in Parliament. If approved by Parliament, the Combined County Authority would be established in time for the first mayoral election to take place in May 2026.</p>

12	Following consultation with the Leader of the Council, and senior officers Southampton City Council's proposed response to the consultation is set out at Appendix 1 for consideration.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
13	There are no direct resource implications from responding to this consultation.
14	It is however anticipated that, if agreed, the establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority may have implications on officer capacity as it is developed. Government have indicated that additional resources may be provided as part of this process however the details have not yet been confirmed.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
15	None
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
16	Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 and S1 Localism Act 2011
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
17	In preparing its consultation response the Council has had regard to the potential impact of any proposals on those with protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and in particular, the Council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in s.149 of the Act. Detailed Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as appropriate as proposals for the region are more fully developed.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
18	None
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
19	The proposed response is not contrary to the Council's approved Policy Framework.

KEY DECISION?	N/A
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All

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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1	Proposed Southampton City Council response to Government consultation on establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight.
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1	Government consultation document on establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight.
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Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.	No
Data Protection Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.	No
Other Background Documents - Other Background documents available for inspection at:	
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1	English Devolution White Paper https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67ade9866e6c8d18118acd58/English_Devolution_White_Paper_Web_Accessible.pdf