

**TITLE OF CONSULTATION:** **AGREEMENT OF THE PROCESS TO CONSIDER THE SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT OF THE YORK AND NORTH YORKSHIRE DEVOLUTION ASKS**

**OFFICER REQUESTING:** **PHILLIP SPURR – PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To determine whether RDC considers its agreement to the submission of the York and North Yorkshire devolution asks to Government under Urgency Powers, or whether the decision to consider submission of the asks is taken through a formal committee and Full Council meeting.
- 1.2 It must be stressed that under whichever circumstance a decision is taken upon whether to support submission of the asks, this would be the start of a negotiation process with Government. A decision would not, at this stage, be about agreeing the asks or a final negotiated devolution deal. It would simply be about endorsing the submission to Government so that devolution negotiation can commence.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

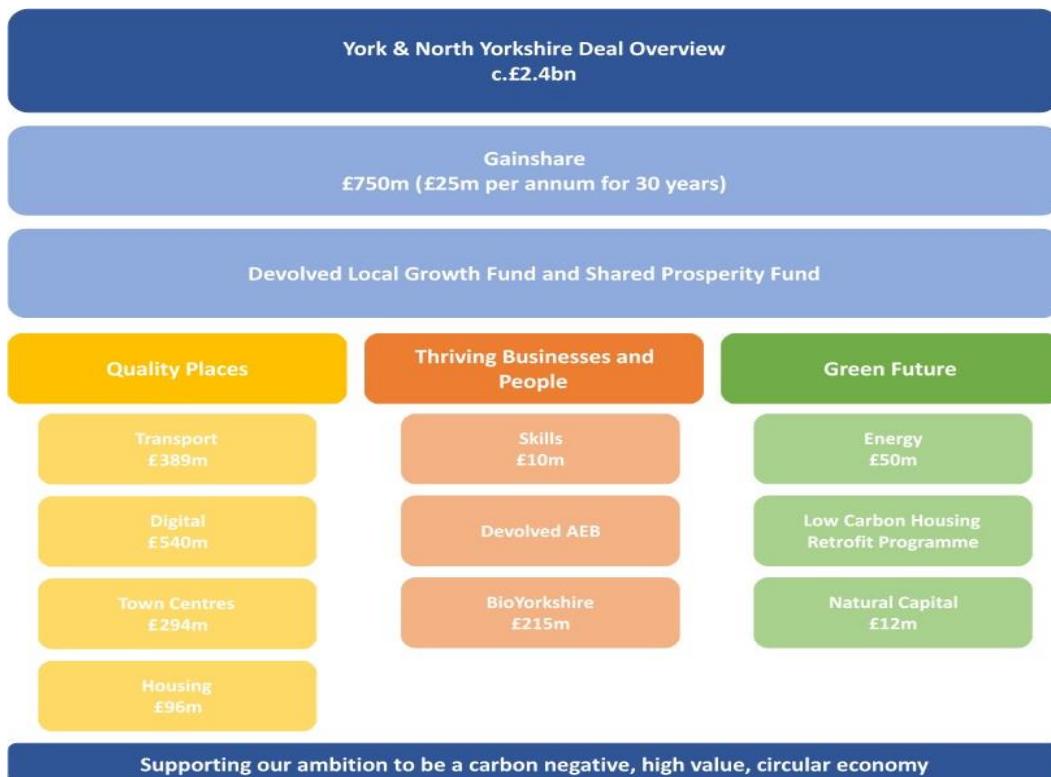
- 2.1 To consider whether RDC:
  - Endorses the submission of the York and North Yorkshire devolution asks to Government under Urgency Powers, or
  - Takes a decision about the submission of the York and North Yorkshire devolution asks to Government through the democratic process, which will involve submission to P&R followed by full Council.

## **3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 In its manifesto in 2019, the Conservative Party set out an ambition for full devolution across England. In essence this involves Central Government devolving some powers down to local level, and committing to a programme of investment to drive economic growth.
- 3.2 Any area that seeks a devolution deal must prepare proposals setting out what level of strategic investment is requested from Government, and how that investment would be spent to drive future sustainable growth. Proposals also include how the local governance structure would work for the devolved geography.
- 3.3 Many councils around the country are currently discussing whether, or how, they might want to engage in the devolution agenda, and what benefits it could bring to their

residents. The Leaders of the Councils in York and North Yorkshire have also been having such discussions.

- 3.4 A devolution deal proposal for York and North Yorkshire has been worked up. If the proposal goes ahead and is accepted by Government, it could mean investment of around £2.4bn on initiatives to transform places, lead the way on a green future, support businesses and people, and make communities safer.
- 3.5 For the residents of Ryedale, it could mean major investment into improved transport infrastructure, digital inclusion, vibrant market towns, housing and skills. It could also see organisations in our district becoming part of a world centre of excellence for bioscience and bio-renewables.
- 3.6 Specifically, proposals within the devolution asks comprise:



- 3.7 Officers have worked with the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Councils across the area over many months to help shape the proposals to reflect the needs of Ryedale.
- 3.8 Meetings to discuss the draft proposals were held with Group Leaders on 6<sup>th</sup> May and 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020, and on 19<sup>th</sup> May an email was sent to all Members inviting comments on the proposals. This generated six responses with respondents recognising the importance of devolution and the potential benefits it could bring to Ryedale, while raising concerns around governance, and highlighting the need for a strong Ryedale voice in the forward process.
- 3.9 A further All-Member Briefing was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 to outline the final devolution proposal, including presentations on the overarching deal and on what opportunities it could offer to Ryedale. There was recognition in this meeting of the importance of securing a deal and support for the submission of the asks to Government.
- 3.10 RDC (like all other Councils across York and North Yorkshire) is required to confirm its support for the submission of the asks prior to submission to Government. It must be

stressed that at this stage RDC is simply being asked to consider endorsing the submission of the asks as the basis of negotiations with Government, and is not formally agreeing the asks themselves. Any formal decision upon the asks and the negotiated devolution deal will be the subject of formal consideration through the Council's committee and Council processes later in the year.

- 3.11 Consideration of agreement to the submission the asks could be taken under Urgency Powers. Alternatively, a decision could be delayed until it can progress through P&R and Full Council, which would allow the opportunity for the matter to be considered through a formal decision-making process with Elected Members.
- 3.12 In parallel with the devolution process on 7<sup>th</sup> July Simon Clarke, the Minister of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, met with all Council Leaders across York and North Yorkshire to discuss devolution. Chief Executives were also in attendance. At that meeting, the Minister again sent a clear message that the Government would be interested to see devolution proposals from York and North Yorkshire. However, a significant change was communicated, with the Minister making it clear that devolution proposals needed to be linked to local government reorganisation. Work on reorganisation proposals is progressing in parallel to this devolution process.
- 3.13 Given that devolution is now inextricably linked to local government reorganisation and the timescales for delivering devolution have slipped to 2023, any delay in the decision-making timescale on submission of the asks is unlikely to have a significant impact.

## **4.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS**

- 4.1 Should RDC not agree to the submission of the devolution asks to Government this would potentially threaten the overall York and North Yorkshire devolution deal.
- 4.2 If a devolution deal is not agreed £2.4bn of investment into York and North Yorkshire would potentially be lost, with Ryedale losing its share of that investment. The powers and funding that devolution offers to Ryedale and the wider North Yorkshire area are crucial to our future economic prosperity. This is even more so in the context of the Covid emergency as we seek to support and grow the district's economy.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The following implications have been identified:

- a) Financial

There are no direct financial implications associated with the submission of the devolution asks to Government. As highlighted above, devolution offers the potential to bring £2.4bn of investment into York and North Yorkshire with a significant proportion of this being invested into the economy of Ryedale.

- b) Legal

The are no direct legal issues associated with agreeing to submit the asks. RDC is not formally agreeing the asks at this stage but rather simply endorsing their submission as the basis of negotiations with Government.

Any decision upon formal RDC agreement of the asks, and the resultant devolution deal proposals, will be taken though the normal committee/Council processes.

- c) Other (Equalities, Staffing, Planning, Health & Safety, Environmental and Climate Change, Crime & Disorder)

The asks are anchored by a devolution vision of York and North Yorkshire becoming England's first carbon negative economy.

Equalities issues will be addressed in the detailed development of individual devolution investment proposals.

## **6.0 MONITORING OFFICER ADVICE**

My advice is that the devolution asks should be considered first at Policy and Resources Committee and then Full Council to allow full and detailed consideration by elected members.

Consultation has already taken place with elected members.

As this is a decision about process and this item of business would have been considered by Policy and Resources Committee and Full Council under business as usual, the Leader, as Chair of Policy and Resources Committee, and the Chair of Council should be consulted.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION RECORD**

According to the Constitution, under urgency powers, decisions usually taken by the Council and its committees are taken by the CEO following consultation with the appropriate elected members.

The appropriate elected members are:

- The Leader of the Council
- The Chair of the appropriate committee, for matters relating to that specific committee<sup>1</sup>
- Relevant Ward member(s), if any, for matters of particular relevance to that ward<sup>2</sup>

Name of consultee	Elected Members
Draft devolution proposals, and the forward approvals process (including a presentation by James Farrar, Chief Operating Officer of the York and North Yorkshire LEP), discussed with Group Leaders (Cllrs Arnold, Burr and Duncan) on 6th May 2020. (Cllr Keal was unable to join the call, and was subsequently briefed separately on 27th May. Cllr Clark gave his apologies to the meeting.)	
All-Member email issued on 19th May inviting comments on the draft devolution proposals. Six sets of comments were received (from Cllrs Arnold, Burr, Duncan, Goodrick, Keal and Oxley). Comments are attached.	
Responses to the All-Member email discussed with Group Leaders (Cllrs Arnold, Burr, Duncan and Keal) on 27th May 2020. Cllr Clark gave his apologies to the meeting.	
All-Member devolution briefing session held on 23rd July, comprising: - presentation of the overall devolution proposals by James Farrar - presentation on potential opportunities offered by devolution to Ryedale by Phillip Spurr - Question & Answer session	
Date consultation completed	Between 06-05-20 & 23-07-20

Name of consultee	Cllr Duncan – Leader of Council
This is not urgently required, and is also likely to be controversial given it relates to local	

<sup>1</sup> "Chairman of the appropriate Committee" refers to committee specific matters and does not mean that all Committee Chairs will be consulted on everything

<sup>2</sup> "Relevant Ward Member(s), if any" refers to ward specific matters and does not mean that all Members will be consulted on everything

government reorganisation, therefore this item should be considered through the formal member decision-making process.

Date consultation completed	26-08-20
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Name of consultee	Cllr Cleary – Chair of Council
Cllr Cleary was consulted on 27 August 2020 and advised that if this is to be decided on at all in its current form it should be through the formal member decision-making process.	

Date consultation completed	27-08-20
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## 8.0 DECISION

Decision of the CEO based on consultation	A member decision on this matter is required under the Committee/Council process.
Date	27-08-20