

Town Clerk's Report

7 February 2024

Devon Devolution Deal

Some of you may have seen that the Government's Devolution Deal for Devon and Torbay has been met with published proposals that could transfer significant decision-making powers and funding to the County. This would include areas such as affordable homes, jobs and skills, and public transport.

Prior to being confirmed, the proposals¹ need to be supported by both Devon County Council, and Torbay Council, following by a six-week period of public consultation.

The deal would see powers and funding transferred to a Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority which would be a partnership of Councillors representing Districts of Devon and Torbay, including representatives from business and education. This group would then deliver on a jointly agreed programme working alongside local stakeholders. A Combined Authority negates the need to have an elected Mayor, nor changes to the current local government structure of Devon, and Torbay.

Specifically, highlights include:

- under the proposals, the CCA would have direct control of adult education to create up to 50,000 new training and retraining opportunities by 2030
- it would create a stronger relationship between employers and schools, colleges and universities to provide the skilled workforce the local economy needs for the future
- it would see the Government transfer over £16 million to invest in new green jobs, homes, skills, and business growth, and accelerate Devon and Torbay's transition to a net-zero economy
- there would be a stronger partnership with Homes England to create a joint local action plan for affordable housing schemes for local people, and reduce homelessness
- it would lead to even closer working between Devon and Torbay to improve the efficiency and co-ordination of public transport. There is an ambition to introduce a single ticketing system for travellers and investment in services to provide greater access to public transport
- Devon and Torbay would be responsible for developing, designing and delivering the next stages of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from 2025
- there would be a significant boost to high growth business sectors in Devon and Torbay, such as advanced marine engineering, defence, photonics and digital

Subject to agreement, public consultation will commence on 12 February.

The Devon Association of Local Councils has been pushing hard for Town and Parish Council's to have a voice at the table and as yet, it is unknown how the deal will directly affect our sector. Further news will likely follow in the coming weeks and months.

¹ Full details available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/devon-and-torbay-devolution-deal/devon-and-torbay-devolution-deal>

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

I am pleased to advise that the expression of interest submitted by the Events, Projects & Tourism Officer has been agreed by Teignbridge in part; feasibility funding amounting to £3,000 has been approved in respect of the provision of a local market, and the wider project of such will likely be funded up to £30,000. Unfortunately, the bid for monies towards renewed Brook lighting was not eligible as it was classed as a public realm feature.

Manor House Canopy

A formal decision is still awaited however a response is expected to be made by 12 February. There is a meeting of the Manor House & Riverside Centre Committee the same day and it is hoped that a positive update will be provided at the meeting. Pressure remains on the Planning Authority to expedite the decision in time for the wider external maintenance works commencing.

External Maintenance Works

External maintenance works to the Manor House are anticipated to start week commencing 18 March, subject to confirmation following meetings between myself, the Contract Administrator, and the Project Lead for the contractor. We will keep Members updated as to progress.

Study Days and Annual Leave

- I will be attending the first University Study Days at De Montfort University, Leicester on Wednesday, 7 February to Friday 9 February inclusive and will have limited access to emails during that time.
- I am on annual leave from Tuesday, 13 February to Friday, 16 February inclusive.