

To: Council

Date: 24 November 2025

Report of: Chief Executive

Title of Report: **Devolution Expression of Interest for Oxfordshire within a Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority**

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To note that Cabinet will take a decision on whether to endorse the submission by Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of all Oxfordshire councils of an Expression of Interest to Government for the inclusion of the Thames Valley area in the next wave of its Devolution Programme.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council
Corporate Priority:	Good, affordable homes Strong, fair economy Thriving communities Zero Carbon Oxford Well-run council
Policy Framework:	The Government’s Devolution White Paper published December 2024 The Council Strategy 2024-28

Recommendation(s): That Council resolves to:	
1.	<p>Note that a Special Cabinet on 4 December will be asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Endorse the benefits from the proposed devolution of powers and functions to a future Thames Valley Mayoral Strategic Authority, and agrees to continue building on the collaborative approach across the region to date; b) Endorse the Expression of Interest (EOI) to be submitted by Oxfordshire County Council as the upper-tier authority to Government, noting that the EOI is designed to proactively position our region for early consideration in the next wave of the Devolution Programme;

- c) Acknowledge the EOI as an initial invitation to Government, opening further dialogue and engagement, and not a decision to establish a Strategic Authority;
- d) Agree that a further report will be brought to Cabinet prior to any final decision by Oxfordshire County Council as upper-tier authority on the creation of a Strategic Authority; and
- e) Note an informal Devolution Programme Board will oversee discussions with Government, ensuring robust governance and stakeholder engagement by elected members throughout this process.

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Report to Cabinet of 4 December 2025	No
Appendix 2	Expression of Interest (EOI) letter to Government	

Introduction and background

1. As Council is aware Government intends to deliver Devolution to all areas in England, as set out in its Devolution White Paper 2024 and enabled through the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill that is currently being considered by Parliament.
2. The Government’s vision is for all parts of England to be part of regional Strategic Authorities led by a regional Mayor. These authorities will drive growth and deliver strategic leadership in areas such as inward investment, employment, skills, strategic planning, sustainability, infrastructure investment and transport.
3. As set out in the Appendix 1, all local authorities in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Swindon have been working together to develop an Expression of Interest (EOI) to Government, requesting the inclusion of the Thames Valley region in the next round of Devolution for the purpose of creating a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA). The EOI is attached in Appendix 2.
4. As only unitary and upper tier councils can formally make a Devolution EOI, Oxfordshire County Council will be doing so on behalf of Oxfordshire local authorities. Oxford City Council’s Cabinet is being asked to endorse the County Council’s submission of the EOI by 19 December.
5. The decision to submit is a matter for Oxfordshire County Council and the decision to endorse is a matter for Cabinet, however it has been considered appropriate to bring this to full Council for noting.

Alternative Options Considered

5. All options on the proposals for submission are outlined in the report at Appendix 1.

Other implications

6. There are no other implications arising from this report to Council. All implications of the decision of Cabinet are outlined within the Appendix 1.

Financial implications

7. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. All implications of the proposals for submission are outlined in Appendix 1.

Legal issues

8. All legal issues are covered within the body of this report and the Appendix 1.

Level of risk

6. There are no risks associated with this recommendation, in relation to the decision of Cabinet they are as outlined in the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

Equalities impact

9. There are no equalities impact associated with this recommendation, in relation to the decision of Cabinet they are as outlined in the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

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Background Papers:
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