

## **COUNCIL MEETING – 26 February 2025**

### **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT: CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON DEVOLUTION**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **That Full Council**

- 1. Approves the expansion of the membership of Member Reference Group (MRG) to include the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group. This will increase its membership to seven.**
- 2. To approve the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group to attend as a substitute to the MRG, in the event that the Leader of the Group cannot.**
- 3. That the MRG continues to provide guidance and advice towards identifying a devolution proposal for Cheshire and Warrington, enabling officers to further progress opportunities and discussions with government officials.**
- 4. Authority be delegated to the MRG, to make any further amendments to its membership, such amendments to be approved by a majority of the members of the MRG.**
- 5. The Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee be amended to extend the rotation of the current Chair (Cheshire West and Chester Council) for a further 12 months to May 2026 and amend accordingly the dates for the following rotations by the same period, including the Vice Chair, as set out in the attached Appendix 1.**

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### **67 SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT: CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON DEVOLUTION**

The committee considered the report which provided an update on Cheshire and Warrington Devolution. The report proposed that the membership of the Member Reference Group for Devolution be expanded to broaden the advice and guidance provided to officers, and also sought approval to proposed amendments to the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee terms of reference, to allow the arrangements for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee to continue for a further year.

It was noted that the Member Reference Group had no Councillor representative from Crewe. The Leader, a member of both the Reference Group and Crewe Town Board, provided assurance that Crewe would continue to be key on the devolution agenda as a principal town for Cheshire East.

Some concerns were raised in relation to the decision-making functions of the Joint Committee and its role to approve capital expenditure. To date, no government transition funding had been announced and permission had been granted to transfer monies from Enterprise Zones to fund the devolution process. The committee sought assurance that monies identified for Enterprise Zone projects were not being inappropriately diverted.

Concerns were raised at the last Finance Sub Committee in relation to the delivery programme of Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (key projects/activities/timelines). It was agreed that a written response would be circulated to the committee. It was requested that any response be published on the council website and shared with members of the Economy and Growth Committee.

The committee discussed Mayoral Candidacy, and concerns were raised in relation to those who may have a conflict of interest should they decide to stand as a candidate for Mayor. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the issue was being monitored by the Monitoring Officer Governance Workstream and advice would be given as appropriate to individuals in due course.

**RESOLVED (unanimously):**

That the Corporate Policy Committee recommends that Full Council

1. Approves the expansion of the membership of Member Reference Group (MRG) to include the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group. This will increase its membership to seven.
2. To approve the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group to attend as a substitute to the MRG, in the event that the Leader of the Group cannot.
3. That the MRG continues to provide guidance and advice towards identifying a devolution proposal for Cheshire and Warrington, enabling officers to further progress opportunities and discussions with government officials.
4. Authority be delegated to the MRG, to make any further amendments to its membership, such amendments to be approved by a majority of the members of the MRG.
5. The Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee be amended to extend the rotation of the current Chair (Cheshire West and Chester Council) for a further 12 months to May 2026 and amend accordingly the dates for the following rotations by the same period, including the Vice Chair, as set out in the attached Appendix 1.