

# EMCCA Devolution Proposal Stakeholder Engagement

## 1. Introduction

- i. As part of the consultation process for the EMCCA devolution proposals, a programme of engagement activities and events was undertaken in order to promote public awareness of the proposals, encourage participation in the consultation survey, and ensure key stakeholder groups and communities of interest and identity were engaged in the consultation process.
- ii. The engagement programme, developed collaboratively across the four Constituent Councils to ensure consistency and geographical parity, enabled those diverse audiences to engage and have their voices heard.
- iii. The following report details the rationale for the engagement programme, and summarises the activities undertaken and how they contributed to the wider consultation process.

## 2. Background

- i. The public consultation to help inform the decision on whether the draft EMCCA devolution proposals should progress to the next stage in the process before being submitted to Government took place between 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023. As part of the process, a number of engagement activities took place throughout the consultation period with the general public and stakeholder groups. The objective of these activities was to help raise awareness of the draft devolution proposals amongst the general public, encourage people to complete the formal consultation survey, and facilitate participation in the consultation of groups identified as needing targeted communication and engagement.
- ii. Various types of engagement activities took place as part of this process including online events, in person events, chat forum engagement and promotion of the consultation to a range of stakeholders to participate through targeted emails and newsletters
- iii. In the course of these engagement activities, Leaders and Senior Officers (and their proxies) from the four Constituent Councils of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham, took the opportunity to be a visible presence in outlining the draft devolution proposals. The meetings and events attended allowed leaders and senior officers to answer questions from the public about the draft proposals, their potential implications and the overall devolution process.
- iv. Across the four Constituent Council areas a total of 24 engagement meetings and events took place, predominantly targeted at groups of citizens with protected characteristics or otherwise identified as being vulnerable and/or disadvantaged. At each of these meetings it was made explicit from the outset that while the aim was to promote the consultation, individuals could if they so wished, have their

views recorded so that they could be fed into the consultation. In the event, there were no submissions of this nature.

- v. The two main public engagement events were held online on Microsoft Teams Live to ensure all members of the public could engage with the process irrespective of where they lived. The second of these incorporated an audience of businesses from D2N2. The other 22 meetings were more targeted in nature. An estimated 400 people took part in these targeted meetings and events. These events were targeted towards specific groups highlighted as part of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and to ensure a broad geographical spread across the proposed EMCCA area.
- vi. Including the numbers estimated to have taken part in the two online public engagement events, an estimated total of 500 people engaged directly either in-person or online in the engagement activity during the consultation period.

### 3. Engagement approach

- i. In preparation for consultation on the draft Devolution proposals, the four Constituent Councils outlined their approach to consultation and engagement in respect of the different groups being engaged, including seldom heard groups, stakeholder organisations, businesses and the general public.
- ii. Planning and oversight of the engagement events programme was led by Nottingham City and supported by officers from the other three Constituent Councils, working together in a dedicated working group. The events that took place in each council area and across the whole of the proposed EMCCA area were coordinated and delivered by the four Constituent Councils in collaboration with each other.
- iii. The engagement programme drew on the findings of the EIA undertaken to assist the Constituent Councils to fully understand the relevance and potential effects of the draft devolution proposals. The EIA stated that communication would take place with a range of citizens and stakeholders including:
  - Residents (in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham)
  - Businesses (in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham)
  - Charity organisations (in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham)
  - Local councils including Town and Parish councils in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire
  - Local MPs (in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham)
  - D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other East Midlands based business organisations
  - Universities and colleges in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham (HE and FE institutions)
  - NHS organisations in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham
  - Police and Crime Commissioners for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire
  - Fire and Rescue services in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham

- iv. An engagement events toolkit was developed to support the consultation and engagement activity. This included a slide presentation, key messages, easy read summary and FAQs. The easy read summary allowed for greater accessibility to individuals who, for example, may have learning difficulties or have trouble with reading. The easy read summary was also available to be translated upon request for those who did not have English as their first language and other formats upon request.

### General public engagement

- v. To maximise public access and awareness of the consultation survey and draft proposals, the two main engagement events were held online using the Microsoft Teams Live platform, hosted by Nottingham City on behalf of the partnership. Events were publicised through the East Midlands Devolution consultation website and through other communications and marketing methods. One event was held in the afternoon, the other in the evening with a panel of Leaders, Chief Executives and Senior Officers from three of the four Constituent Councils at the first event and all four at the second event. The option of two events ensured two opportunities for the public to attend an engagement event at a suitable time to meet their needs.
- vi. Following a slide presentation highlighting the draft devolution proposals, a live Q&A session was held with a panel of Leaders, Chief Executives and Senior Officers, fielding questions and comments from the audience. Each event had a peak attendance of 35 locations, including multiple viewers from some locations, giving an estimated audience of 50 participants at each event, or 100 in total.

### Businesses and stakeholder organisations engagement

- vii. A dedicated stakeholder conference for public, private and voluntary sector organisations was held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Nottingham. The proceedings of this are detailed in Appendix 1.
- viii. The second online public engagement event incorporated an audience of businesses engaged through the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership, in place of a dedicated engagement event for business.

### Seldom heard groups engagement

- ix. In respect of engagement with underrepresented and hard to reach communities, the engagement programme drew on the findings of the EIA undertaken to assist the Constituent Councils to fully understand the relevance and potential effects of the draft Devolution proposal.
- x. The engagement activities carried out supported the objectives of the EIA by ensuring the consultation was wide-ranging and employed a range of different formats and methods, in order to access as many people as possible across the proposed EMCCA area. Active steps were taken to promote the consultation, to

encourage participation and to ensure that the consultation was accessible to all, including seldom heard groups, for example, the digitally disadvantaged and those with protected characteristics.

- xi. In addition, the consultation survey could be tailored to needs on request (for example, paper, large print, translation provided, braille, BSL etc). To achieve this objective, the survey was made available in hard copy in local libraries and other civic venues, and this was well publicised. In addition, a hard copy was available on direct request from Ipsos UK. These measures helped ensure that digitally excluded people could access the survey.
- xii. Where appropriate, promotional activities took place to reach out to those seldom heard groups who it was felt would be unlikely to require a tailored event (for example the Poverty Commission), or where it was felt an event would not be feasible due to the inability or impracticality of convening one. The consultation was therefore promoted even where events had not been set up specifically for a group or groups.

### Communication approach

- xiii. Institutional stakeholders, including within the Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Derby and Nottingham area, including local councils, Police and Crime Commissioners, Fire and Rescue services, NHS organisations, the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other East Midlands based business organisations, and universities and colleges, were contacted through a variety of methods, including marketing communications, newsletter contact and communication in the stakeholder contact. Residents, businesses and charities were reached through a variety of communications and targeted engagement.
- xiv. The groups with protected characteristics identified in the EIA were engaged with in the process through a variety of methods. Depending on the composition of the voluntary sector in each area, the nature and extent of engagement varied.
- xv. Given the widespread and diverse nature of people with protected characteristics, and the difficulty of identifying those communities in some of our local authority areas, we believe our approach offered multiple means of engagement.

## **4. Findings and recommendations from the engagement process**

- i. Participants involved in the various engagement events and processes outlined in this report were informed about the formal consultation process and signposted to available resources such as the EMCCA Devolution website to submit a formal response, should they wish to do so. All questions and comments received during the programme of engagement are therefore set against this context (as referred to previously). As such, any sentiments expressed by individuals or businesses during the engagement events may or may not have translated into formal survey data depending on whether they in fact completed the consultation survey. Whilst the engagement events were not part of the formal consultation process, a number of issues were raised during discussions that are worthy of note. These

issues were also reflected in the consultation survey responses. The Constituent Councils' response to these points is laid out in an appendix to the main report.

- ii. In terms of the main focus of discussion at many of the events, there were questions about the governance structure of the EMCCA, with voluntary and community sector groups, business organisations and education partners all keen to know how they might be involved in mayoral decision making, and how they could hold the Mayor's office to account. Participants also raised questions about the funding settlement, its potential strengths and weaknesses, and implications on future investment and government funding.
- iii. The issue of the desirability of having a mayoral body was raised multiple times, with some expressing a view that the proposed arrangements would not be accountable and would add an unnecessary and expensive layer of bureaucracy to local government. However, most people attending events who expressed a view were supportive of the need for the increased investment in the region and acknowledged the benefits of having a strong regional leader figure with devolved powers.
- iv. Of the various priorities in the draft proposals, transport was of consistent interest, with comparison made to other devolved areas in terms of potential for region-wide ticketing policy and better integration of public transport systems. There were fewer questions relating specifically to adult skills, net-zero and housing, however these were often referred to tangentially through discussion of powers and funding.
- v. There were feelings from various protected characteristic representative groups, expressed especially by the Disability Inclusion Group in Nottingham City, that they could not see how they could be a part of the process beyond the public consultation. Similarly, some groups highlighted the fact they felt like a box to be ticked and are only consulted when the council needs something. It was expressed that there is a perception of a lack of continuous communication between local government and groups with protected characteristics.
- vi. A recommendation therefore would be to consider how voluntary and community sector groups and individuals with protected characteristics are engaged with throughout the process in delivering the devolution proposals, subject to the decision to progress to the next stage in the process; and how they would be represented in the structure of the mayor's decision-making apparatus and administration.

## 5. Stakeholder engagement events

- i. The following table shows the targeted stakeholders engagement events that took place, groups were engaged with, and the form of engagement.

Council	Stakeholder	Who (Group)	Type of engagement	Date	Geographical Area
Derbyshire County Council	Disabilities	Derbyshire Stakeholder Engagement Group	In-person meeting	16.12.22	Derbyshire
Derbyshire County Council	Age	Derbyshire Youth Network	Online meeting	20.12.22	Derbyshire
Derbyshire County Council	Race and ethnic origin	Derbyshire BME Forum	Online meeting	13.12.22	Derbyshire (with some Derby)
Derby City Council	Disabilities	Access, Equality and Inclusion Hub	Joint Conference and Online meeting	7.12.22	Derby
Derby City Council	Disabilities	Deaf Forum	Joint Conference and Online meeting	14.12.22	Derby
Derby City Council	Age	60+ Forum	Joint Conference and Online meeting	7.12.22	Derby
Derby City Council	Race and ethnic origin	Race Equality Hub	Joint Conference and Online meeting	7.12.22	Derby

## Appendix 4

Derby City Council	Race and ethnic origin	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Employee Network	Joint Conference and Online meeting	7.12.22	Derby
Nottinghamshire County Council	Disabilities	Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHFA)	Online meeting	23.11.22	Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire County Council	Disabilities	Mental Health and Wellbeing	In-person meeting	6.11.22	Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire County Council	Age	Newark & Sherwood CVS	In-person and Teams meeting	21.11.22	Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire County Council	Sexual Orientation	LGBT+ Network	Online Meeting	08.12.22	Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire County Council	Race and ethnic origin	Black Workers Group	Online meeting	16.11.22	Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire County Council	Race and ethnic origin	Black Workers Group	Online meeting	21.12.22	Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire County Council	Race and ethnic origin	Caribbean Elders' Luncheon Club	In-person meeting	8.12.22	Nottinghamshire
Nottinghamshire County Council	Voluntary and community sector groups	Ashfield Voluntary Action & Citizens Advice Ashfield	Online meeting	13.12.22	Nottinghamshire
Nottingham City Council	Multiple characteristics	Faith, Age and Voluntary Sector	In-person meeting	12.12.22	Nottingham
Nottingham City Council	Voluntary and community sector groups	NCVS member groups	Online meeting	15.12.22	Nottingham

Nottingham City Council	Disadvantage/Deprivation	One Nottingham Partnership	In-person meeting	12.12.22	Nottingham
Nottingham City Council	Young People	Youth Cabinet	In-person meeting	14.12.22	Nottingham
Nottingham City Council	Disadvantage/Deprivation	All protected characteristics	In-person meeting	21.12.22	Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Nottingham City Council	Disabilities	Disability Inclusion Group	In-person meeting	6.1.23	Nottingham

ii. Targeted stakeholder groups reached through promotion

These included:

Dis-ability Employee Network, Derbyshire 50+ Network, Derbyshire LGBTQ+, BME Employee Network, Multi Faith Centre Derby University, Derbyshire LGBTQ+, Belper Pride (Organisation), DCC Pride Network, Derbyshire Community directory, East Midlands Veteran’s Advisory and Pensions Committee, Thriving Communities localities, Disabled Employees Network, Poverty Commission, Self Help UK (currently registered as Self-Help Nottingham), Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries, Age UK Nottingham & Nottinghamshire, Notts Women's Aid, Bassetlaw CVS, Community Accounting Plus, One Nottingham, Disability Inclusion Group, Nottingham City Youth Cabinet, Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services, Trans Unite.