

By: Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer
To: Scrutiny Committee, 26 February 2025
Subject: Devolution and Local Government Reform.

Summary: The Chairman and Spokespeople of the Scrutiny Committee have asked that this issue be placed on the agenda for discussion.

1. Introduction

- a) Following the Cabinet decision, on 9 January 2025 to proceed with a proposal for devolution the Scrutiny Committee met to discuss and note the urgent decision taken.
 - b) On Wednesday 5 February 2025 the Leader was told by Government that Kent and Medway had not been selected as one of the areas that would be part of its Devolution Priority Programme.
 - c) Despite Kent not currently being on the devolution propriety programme the Government has told the county's council leaders that they must press ahead with their proposals for local government reorganisation, and that all two-tier authorities should now make plans to merge to create single authorities, and make structures simpler and more efficient.
 - d) By 21 March 2025, an interim proposal should be developed by the leaders of KCC, Medway Council and all twelve district and borough councils in the county. This should set out how Kent and Medway could be divided into unitary authorities, with full proposals expected by 28 November.
-

2. Recommendation

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to discuss and comment on or note the update provided by the Leader of the Council.

3. Background documents

- a) [Agenda for Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 29th January, 2025, 10.00 am](#)
- b) [Agenda for County Council on Thursday, 9th January, 2025, 10.00 am](#)
- c) [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 9th January, 2025, 2.00 pm](#)
- d) [Devolution derailed in Kent but plans for major council shake up to go ahead - News & Features - Kent County Council](#)

- e) ["A totally incomprehensible decision" - KCC Leader reacts to Government's decision not to include Kent on its Devolution Priority Programme - News & Features - Kent County Council](#)
- f) [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)

Contact Details

Anna Taylor, Scrutiny Research Officer
anna.taylor@kent.gov.uk 03000 416478