



**Cheshire +
Warrington**

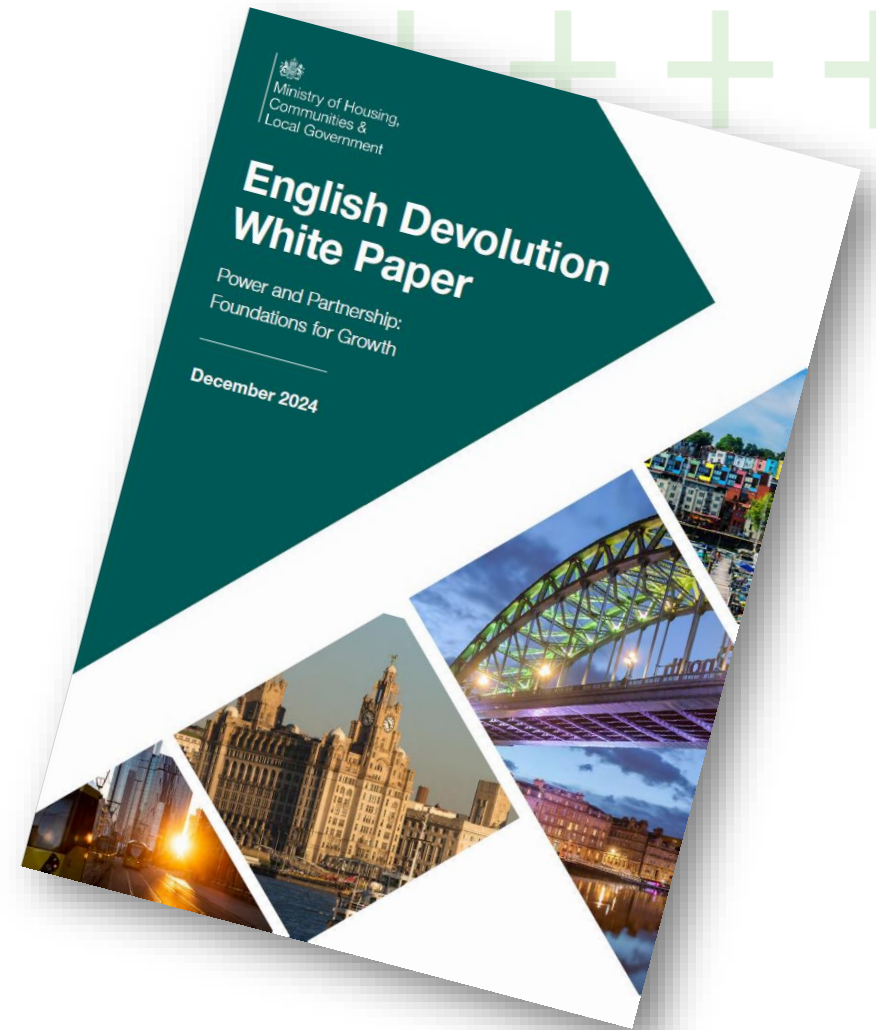
**Powering our future
through devolution**



AUGUST 2025

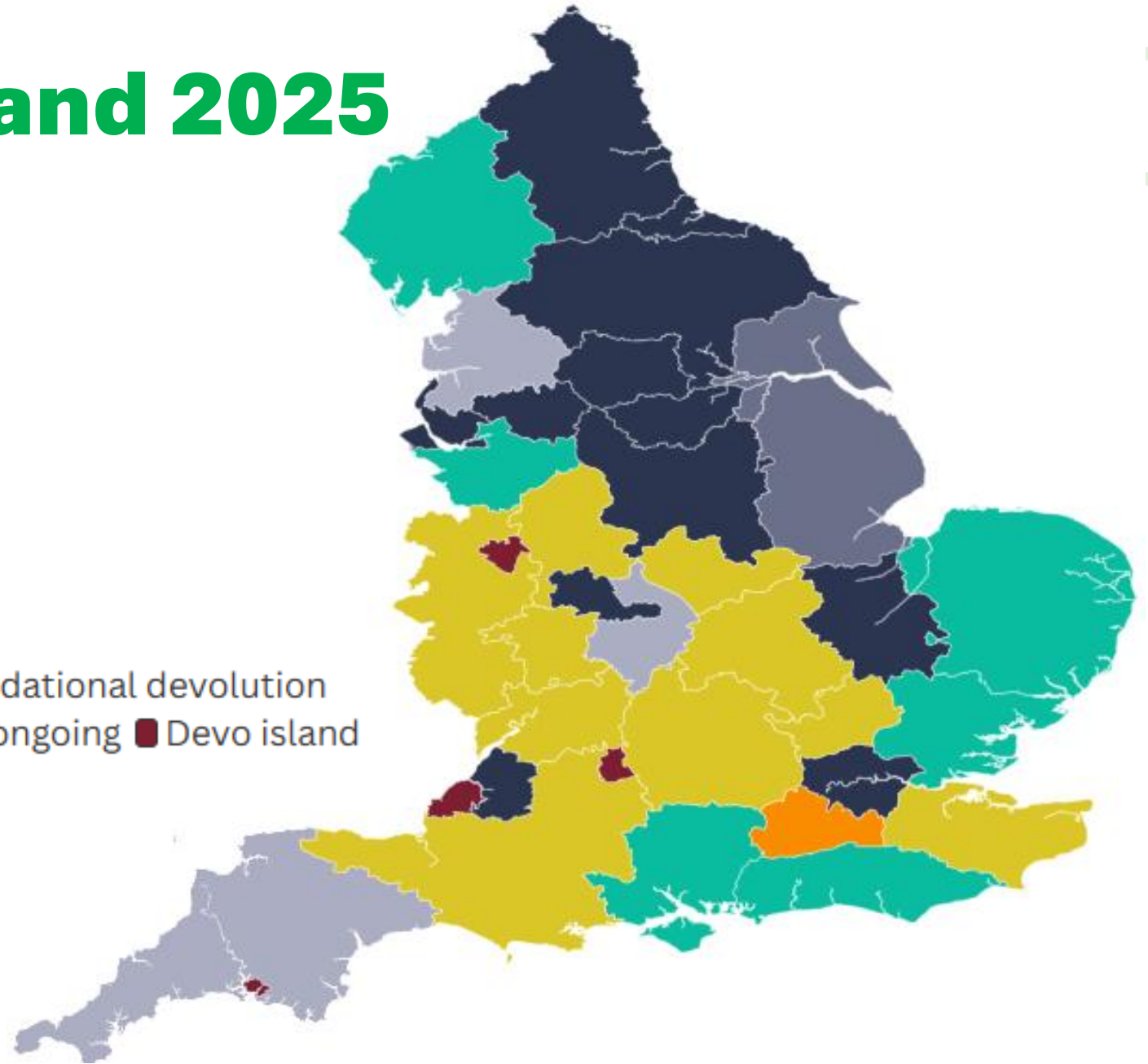
English devolution

- English Devolution White Paper
- English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill
- Bringing decisions close to those they affect
- Move from negotiated agreement to a devolution framework
- Premium for a directly elected mayor
- 'Floor - not the ceiling'
- Devolution = Default Position



Devolution in England 2025

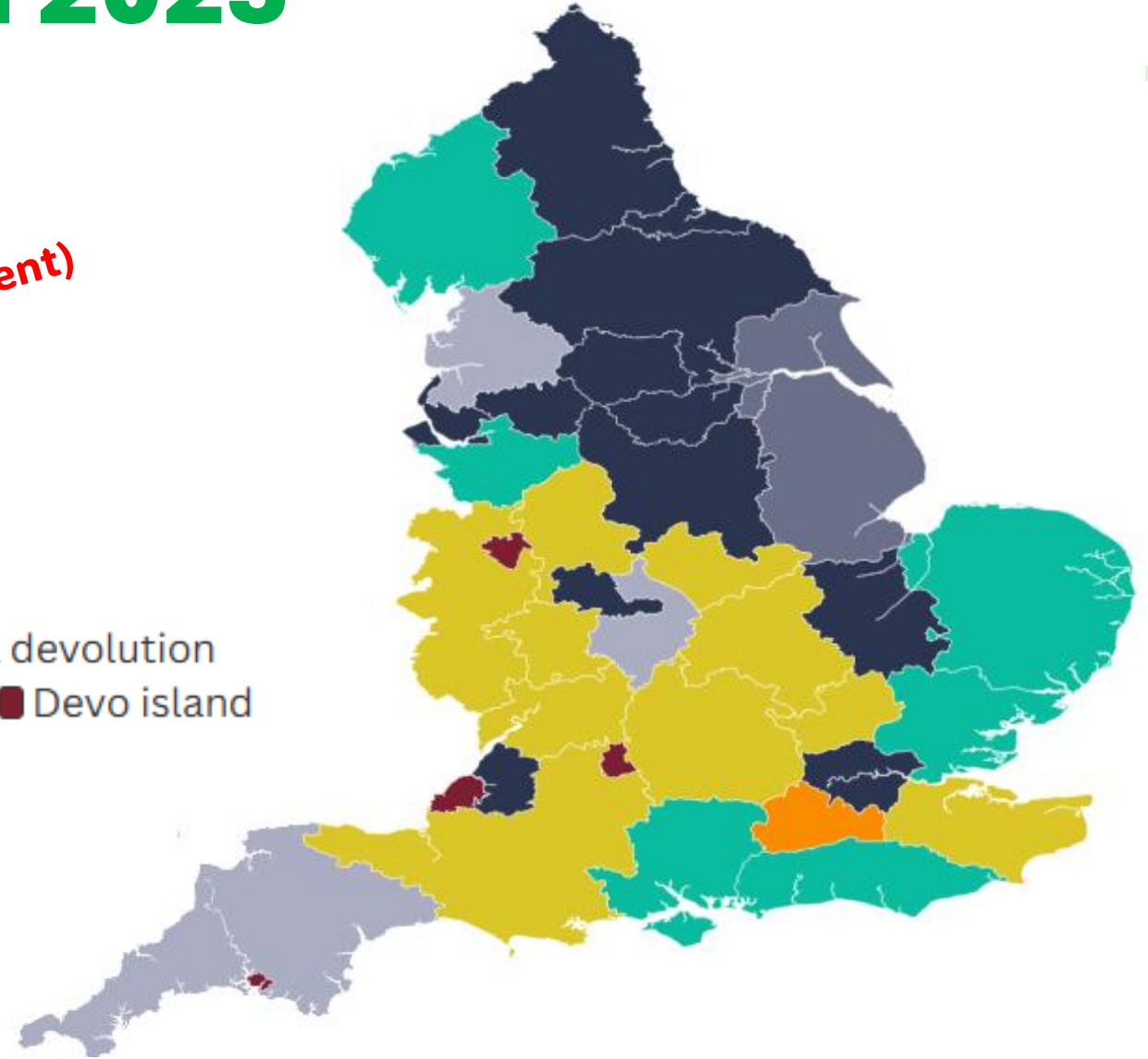
- Strategic authority
- Priority programme
- Foundational devolution
- First mayoral elections May 2025
- Discussions ongoing
- Devo island
- Reorganisation fast track



Devolution in England 2025

**Cheshire and Warrington
Priority Programme pioneers...**
(unlocking additional support & investment)

- Strategic authority
- Priority programme
- Foundational devolution
- First mayoral elections May 2025
- Discussions ongoing
- Devo island
- Reorganisation fast track



A reminder...

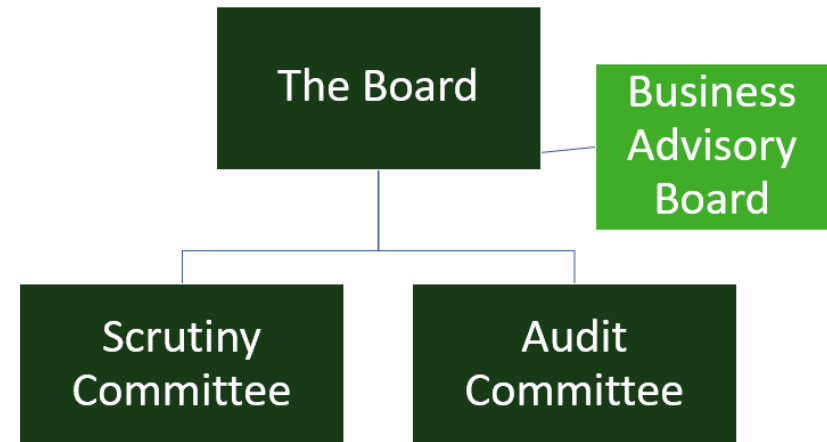
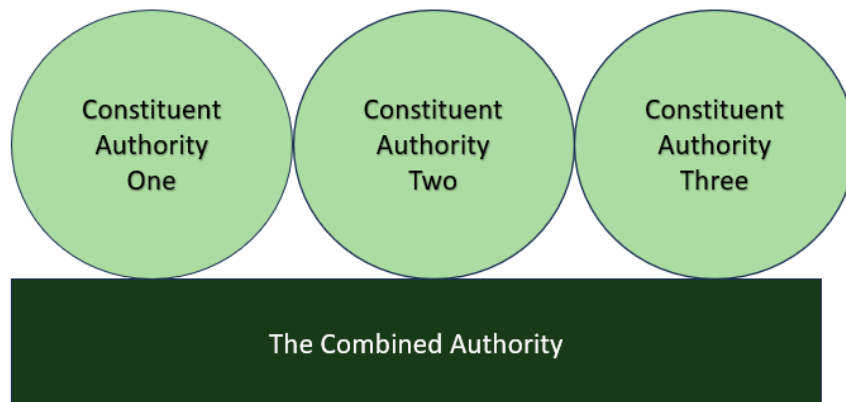


- Each council in Cheshire and Warrington will still be a Unitary Authority – this isn't about merger
- Individual councils will continue to deliver services for their residents/boroughs
- The new Combined Authority will focus on regional strategies and policies, and be responsible for setting a Transport Plan and a Local Growth Plan for the whole area

The Combined Authority



- An organisation led by a directly-elected mayor and a board made up of representatives of the constituent authorities.
- It is a strategic authority focused on economic growth responsibilities and delivers for the whole area it covers in partnership with the constituent authorities and others



The Devolution Priority Programme

Cheshire & Warrington are part of the Devolution Priority Programme

Government led public consultation closed on 13 April 2025

Government has confirmed that Cheshire & Warrington meet the 'statutory test'

Key decisions need to be taken by all three local authorities to agree to progress



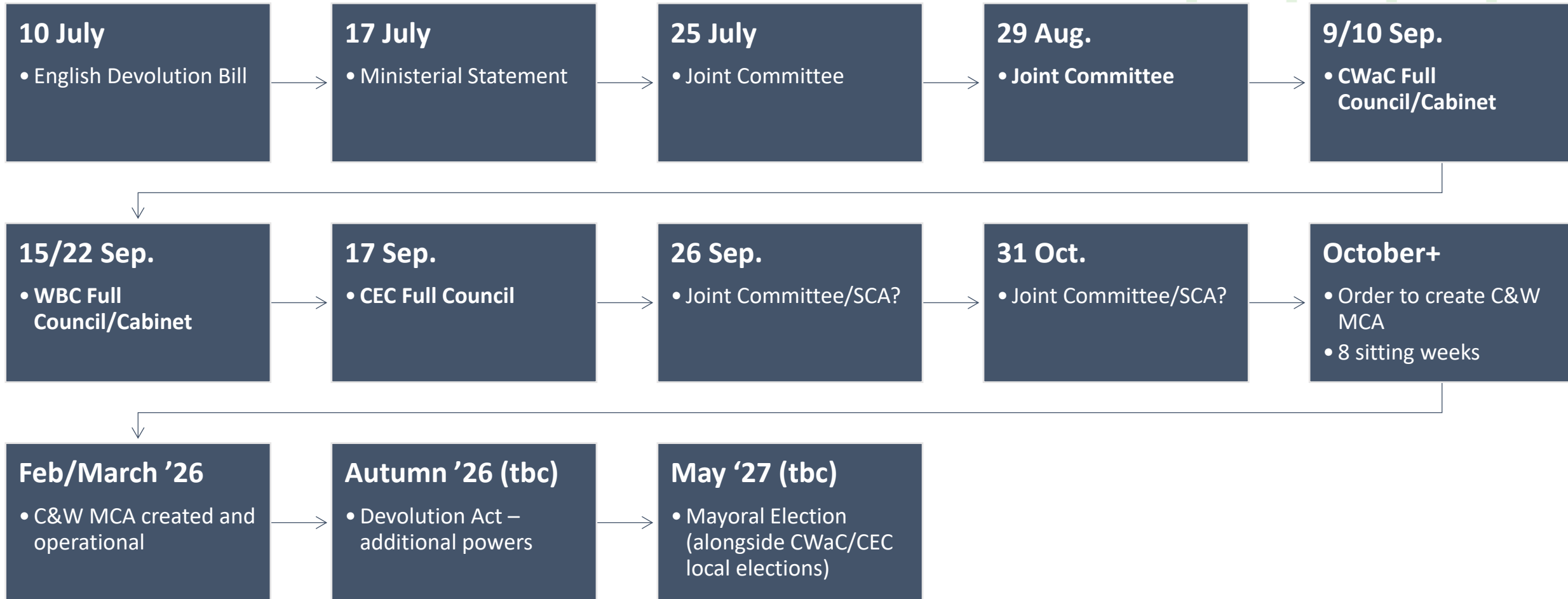
Summary headlines

**Cheshire and Warrington Devolution
and the Mayoral Combined Authority**

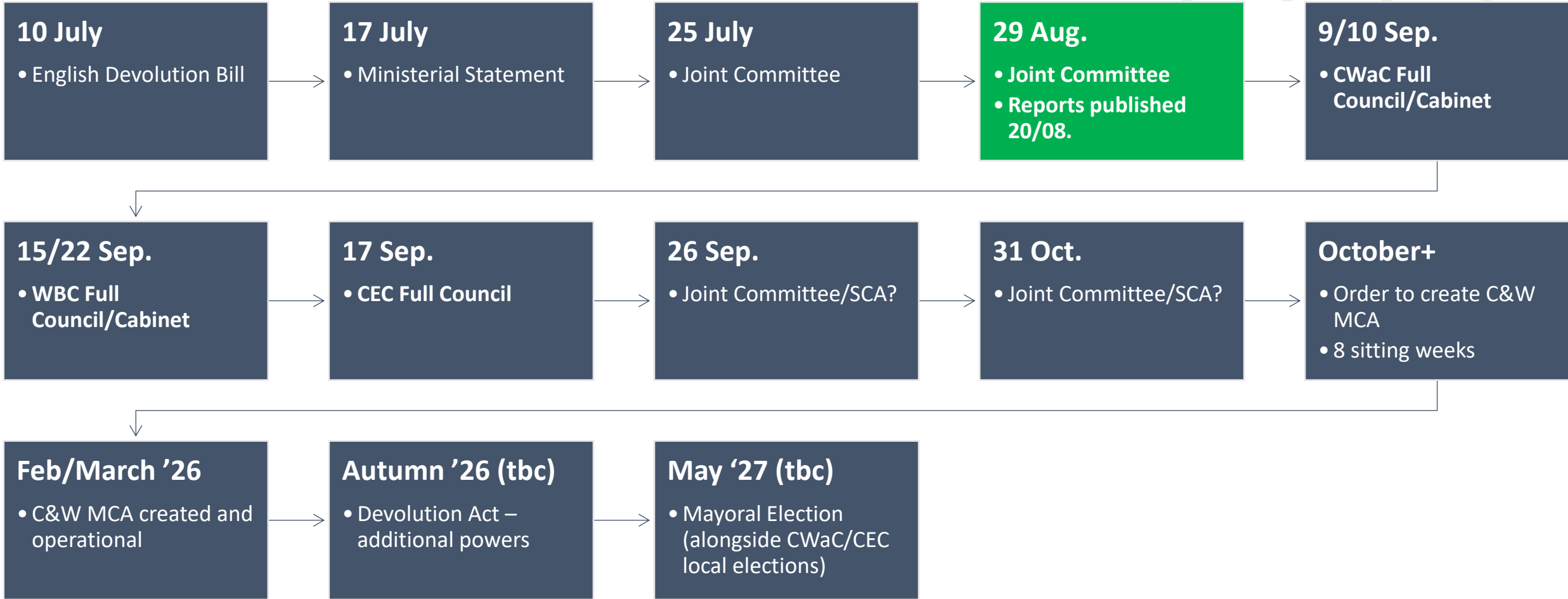
Report to Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee

29th August 2025

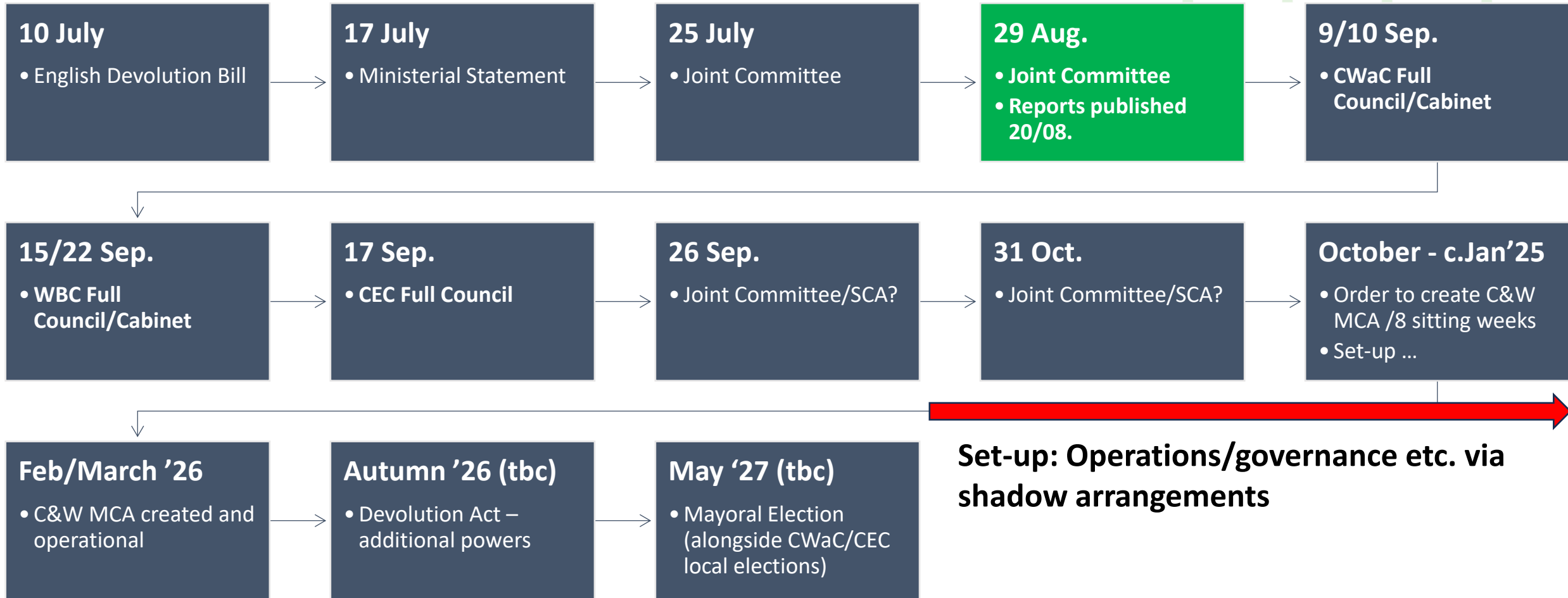
Timeline (latest @ 18/08)



Timeline (latest @ 18/08)



Timeline (latest @ 18/08)



Purpose of the report



- Outlines the devolution powers, functions and future investment opportunity for Cheshire and Warrington, to be delivered via a newly created Combined Authority
- Seeks strategic direction and oversight across potential devolution for Cheshire and Warrington.
- The Joint Committee will be recommended to endorse recommendations for decision by each of the Councils in Cheshire and Warrington, in line with each Council's constitutional arrangements, as part of the formal consenting process to proceed with a Combined Authority and associated devolution powers, functions and investment.


What is covered?

- *Why?* The strategic rationale for wanting devolution including findings of all consultation and engagement.
- *When?* Timeline for the anticipated creation and development of the Combined Authority (CA) and the interim 'shadow' arrangements along the way.
- *How?* The governance framework in which the CA will be established, constituted, governed and scrutinised, and the operating model of the new organisation
- *What?* The powers and functions that the CA will have – day 1 and after the establishment of the ED&CE Act.
- *With what?* The financial arrangements and expected funding model.

Recommendations

1. To approve in principle **the establishment of a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority** in accordance with existing legislation under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (as amended).
2. To **delegate authority** to the lead Chief Executive Officers, or their authorised deputy, to consent to the making of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Order 2026 in accordance with s.110(1)(b) Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
3. To agree to hold inaugural **Mayoral Elections in May 2027**.
4. Subject to approval of the above recommendations, to **create a new joint committee, to be known as the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board**, to provide strategic direction and interim arrangements in the best interests of the establishment of a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.

Recommendations

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5. To approve the **Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board** as outlined at Appendix B and to **delegate authority to the Constituent Members of the Shadow Board to carry out the roles and functions** as set out in the Terms of Reference.
 6. To note that the **Constituent Members for the Shadow Board will be the Leaders and Deputy Leaders** of each constituent council as set out in the proposed Terms of Reference.
 7. To **amend the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Terms of Reference** as outlined at Appendix C to reflect the revised function of the Joint Committee following establishment of the Combined Authority Shadow Board.
 8. To appoint **new membership from each Council to the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee** in accordance with the Joint Committee Terms of Reference.
 9. To **delegate authority** to the Chief Executives, in consultation with the Leaders, of each constituent council, **to take all other steps necessary to establish and implement the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.**



A bit more on the ‘how and what’...

Detailed within the report and appendices

Statutory Instrument



- A Statutory Instrument (SI) is a form of secondary legislation.
- It outlines changes to existing legislation without needing to create a new Act.
- The SI will then form the ‘Order’ which establishes the rules and procedures that govern how the Cheshire and Warrington Mayoral Combined Authority (C&W MCA) will operate as a public body.
- When the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (EDB) becomes an Act and goes through the full parliamentary process these additional functions will apply to what will then be the Cheshire and Warrington Mayoral Strategic Authority (C&W MSA).

What governance is set out in the SI?

- As part of the SI, a **statutory constitution** is included as a schedule to the Order. Standardising governance across ALL Combined Authorities (and Strategic Authorities)
- Whilst C&W can add a **local constitution** with additional bespoke sections, it must maintain the following core governance arrangements:
 - **Membership:**
 - 2 x elected members from each constituent council
 - Each member to have 1 named substitute
 - **Chair/Vice-Chair:**
 - Before the mayor is elected, the CA will appoint a chair and vice-chair from the constituent council members
 - Once the term of office starts, the mayor will be the chair of the CA.
 - No meeting can happen without the chair or vice chair present
 - ***Non-constituent and associate members:**
 - A maximum of 6
 - Non-constituent bodies must nominate a member and named substitute
 - Associate members must nominate a named substitute

**Non-constituent: Representatives of an organisation (e.g. PCC/VCFSE/NHS) Associate: Named individual*

How decisions are made...



- **Simple majority** of the members present (*pre-May 2027 mayoral election*)
- **Simple majority plus mayor** or deputy mayor (*post-May 2027 mayoral election*)
- **Before the mayor's term of office**, no business can be conducted unless the chair or vice-chair and at least 3 members from constituent councils are present.
- **After the mayor begins in office**, no business can be conducted unless the mayor (or deputy mayor) and at least 4 members from the constituent councils are present.

How do decisions about funding and budgets work?

- Constituent councils must ensure that CA costs are aligned to the exercise of its functions.
- Constituent councils must meet reasonable costs of the Combined Authority/mayoral functions if they are not funded via the resources of the CA (including any precept).
- All mayoral costs must first be agreed by the CA. **The mayor cannot incur any expenditure unless agreed by the CA.**
- **Constituent councils cannot be liable for any expenditure, unless the Combined Authority has approved** such a request in accordance with its budget decision-making processes.
- To minimise financial risk, the CA would set up with effective governance, a robust financial assurance framework and strong financial management.
- Key safeguards will include the establishment of an **Audit Committee** and a statutory Chief Financial Officer post (otherwise known as a Section 73 Officer).

What functions will be in place from 'day 1'? (i.e. before the EDB)

1. The same functions as constituent councils to deliver economic development and regeneration. (*These powers/functions will run concurrently with councils*).
2. **Transport:**
 - The CA will become the Local Transport Authority for Cheshire and Warrington.
 - This will be established via a 1-year transition period (from the date that the MCA is established by the Order)
 - **Transition: LTA function will be concurrent between the CA and constituent councils.**
 - The CA will be responsible for the development of the C&W Local Transport Plan.
 - The Local Transport Grant for C&W will come via the MCA.
 - The CA will be responsible for passenger transport:
 - Concessionary fares process and permits
 - Bus services, including bus service improvement plans
 - **However**, there will be a permanent concurrent arrangement where a constituent council already runs its own municipal bus company. This is the case for WBC.
 - Constituent councils remain as the Local Highway Authority for their area.

What funding do we expect in 2026/7?

- 2025-6: £1m capacity funding (if councils x 3 approve).
- Plus capacity funds 2026/7 – 2028/9
- 30-year Mayoral Investment Fund (50:50 capital/revenue). *Illustrative model c.£600m / c.£20m p.a.*
- Whitehall Dept funds (amounts tbc in 2026):
 - *DfT*
 - *DfE*
 - *DBT*
 - *MHCLG*



The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

What will it mean for C&W devolution?





What does the Bill do?

1. The Bill seeks to describe a consistent approach to devolution structures – and as far as possible gives increased consistency to new and existing governance arrangements.
2. It outlines and expands powers for Mayors and authorities (**Strategic Authorities**)
3. It explains the routes to get further devolved powers over time

NB...



- It should be noted that the Bill would also enable the Secretary of State to establish a new Strategic Authority or expand existing institutions without the consent of local areas.
- Whilst the government has been clear it would limit the use of this power to instances when other routes had been exhausted, it should nonetheless be noted that this power would exist.



Overview of devolution functions and powers within the Bill...

**That would then transfer to a C&W MSA once
legislation is in place (anticipated in 2026)**

Transport & local infrastructure



In addition to the powers and functions under the SI...

- MSAs will be required to set up and coordinate Key Route Networks (KRN) (oversight of most important local roads)
- Mayors will have a legal power to set Traffic Reduction Targets on the KRN.
- The MSA can regulate on-street micromobility schemes through a licensing regime (e.g. e-bikes).
- MSAs can apply to take on Penalty Charge Notices powers (as long as they have the consent of their constituent councils).
- The MSA can charge a transport levy to constituent councils.
- Additionally (not in the Bill but via other legislation)
 - The mayor will have a statutory role in governing, managing, planning and developing the rail network and local rail stations.

Housing & strategic planning

- The Bill will give mayors new planning powers similar to those exercised by the Mayor of London. Including:
 - Publish a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) setting out the vision for development across C&W. Once this is agreed and in place, the mayor will then have...
 - The ability to direct refusal of planning applications of potential strategic importance
 - The ability 'call in' these sort of applications
 - The option to charge a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy on new developments to support infrastructure requirements. (Any CIL charging schedule will need a majority agreement from the constituent council).
 - Mayors will also be able to prepare Mayoral Development Orders (MDO) – which streamlines planning permission processes. Any MDO must be consulted with and approved by the relevant local planning authority.
 - And... designate a Mayoral Development Area and establish a Mayoral Development Corporation to support delivery of large, complex development and regeneration projects.
 - Additional funding will be given to support the development of the SDS.
 - Additional funds such as housing and brownfield land development are likely to follow.

Economic growth & regeneration



- A statutory duty to develop a Local Growth Plan which will also outline shared priorities with Government and an investment pipeline.
- There will be a legal responsibility for certain public organisations to ‘have regard’ to the shared priorities of the Local Growth Plan.
- The Bill will require MSAs to work with the LGPS to jointly invest in local projects which deliver social and/or economic benefits to our local communities (as well as financial return).

Environment & Climate Change

- The Bill does not transfer statutory environmental or climate-related functions to Strategic Authorities, but it gives the responsibility for the development and delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and does commit to explore future opportunities for devolution in this area
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Skills & employment support

- The Bill will transfer adult education functions to MSAs, including the devolution of the Adult Skills Fund (19+).
- This funding will be non-ringfenced which means the MSA can determine how best to use the fund via the creation of a Local Skills Plan.
- Devolution of 'supported employment funding' to support those furthest from employment to find and sustain a job.

Health, wellbeing & public safety

- MSAs will have a legal requirement to 'have regard' to the need to reduce health inequality in C&W and improve people's health in the area. Health impacts should be considered in all policies of the MSA.
- The mayor in C&W will **not** be responsible for exercising police functions.



QUESTIONS...

We will be capturing questions/answers from all sessions to share via a 'FAQ' summary