



Notes of the meeting of Leadership Gloucestershire held on  
Thursday, 29 October 2015

**1 Welcome, introduction and apologies**

| <i>Name</i>                 | <i>Organisation</i>  | <i>Apologies</i>      |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Cllr Mark Hawthorne (Chair) | Gloucestershire County Council   |                       |
| Pete Bungard                | Gloucestershire County Council   |                       |
| Cllr Geoff Wheeler          | Stroud District Council  |                       |
| David Hagg                  | Stroud District Council  |                       |
| Cllr David Norman           | Gloucester City Council  | Cllr Paul James       |
| Jon McGinty                 | Gloucester City Council  |                       |
| Cllr Christopher Hancock    | Cotswold District Council  | Cllr Lynden Stowe     |
| Christine Gore              | Cotswold District Council  | David Neudegg         |
| Cllr Brian Robinson         | Forest of Dean District Council  | Cllr Patrick Molyneux |
| Peter Hibberd               | Forest of Dean District Council  |                       |
| Cllr Steve Jordan           | Cheltenham Borough Council   |                       |
| Andrew North                | Cheltenham Borough Council   |                       |
| Cllr Robert Vines           | Tewkesbury Borough Council   |                       |
| Mike Dawson                 | Tewkesbury Borough Council   |                       |
| Martin Surl                 | Gloucestershire Police and<br>Crime Commissioner                                       |                       |
| Richard Bradley             | Police and Crime<br>Commissioner's Office  |                       |
| Suzette Davenport           | Gloucestershire Constabulary   |                       |
| Dr Andy Seymour             | NHS Gloucestershire Clinical<br>Commissioning Group                                    | Dr Helen Miller       |
| Mary Hutton                 | NHS Gloucestershire Clinical<br>Commissioning Group                                    |                       |
| Diane Savory                | GFirst LEP   |                       |
| David Owen                  | GFirst LEP   |                       |
| Jane Burns                  | Gloucestershire County Council   |                       |
| Jo Walker                   | Gloucestershire County Council   |                       |
| Simon Harper                | Gloucestershire County Council   |                       |
| Katie Jenkins               | Government representative –<br>Department for Business,<br>Innovation and Skills (BIS) |                       |

## 2 Last meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 2 September 2015 were approved. All matters arising had been completed or were on the agenda.

## 3 We are Gloucestershire Devolution bid

### a) Update on negotiations

Each of the work stream leads provided progress reports on their area.

- Planning, Transport and Infrastructure – Mike Dawson
- Economy and Growth – David Owen
- Health and Social Care – Mary Hutton
- Community Safety – Richard Bradley
- Finance and Assets – Jo Walker
- Governance – Andrew North
- Communications and Engagement – David Hagg

Progress was generally good and the deadline of 30 October for the first phase of the negotiations would be met. The deal document would be drawn up by Mike Wiltshire and Katie Jenkins from BIS. The least amount of clarity was around the Health and Social Care aspects of the bid. NHS England had set out their principles for Devolution and more detailed conversations would be held over coming weeks.

It was just the start of the process for the public sector in Gloucestershire and the Government working together and hopefully there would be opportunities for further devolution of powers and funding. Some Government departments had been slower coming to the table than others but they were coming under increasing pressure to follow the lead taken by others.

Cllr Steve Jordan requested that LG be given an update on the position regarding the devolution of transport funding including public transport.

**Action** – Nigel Riglar

### b) Implications of the Chancellor's Business Rates announcement

Jo Walker stated that there was still a great deal of work to be done before the full implications of allowing councils to retain 100% of business rates were known. The national position was not likely to be clear for 18-24 months with adjustments required to existing grants and funding of new burdens. It was complex as there would still be a need for some redistribution for those authorities who would receive significantly less from business rates than their current funding from Central Government. Gloucestershire, however, was not in this position and might be well placed to trial new arrangements.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne stated that the Chancellor's announcement would fundamentally change the relationship with Government. Local authorities would no longer be reliant on grants from Government and the incentive for business rate growth would become much stronger.

**c) Update on Governance**

Andrew North reported that the review of evidence had been produced and desk based research had been undertaken on potential governance models. A combined authority was the preferred model. ResPublica, a firm with a strong track record in working on Devolution deals, had been commissioned to give an independent view on the best approach for Gloucestershire. They had interviewed a number of people from across the public sector and had concluded that an elected mayor would not work in the county and a combined authority was the best fit.

There was some concern about particular comments in the ResPublica report in that they might be wrongly attributed to individuals involved in the process. A request was made that the report was edited before it was circulated any wider.

**Action** – *Jane Burns*

There was some discussion on aligning local government election cycles. The position was complex but it was recognised that it would be unwise to rule out any change in the future. However, this could not be pursued in the short-term as it would require the agreement of all the councils. A suggestion was made that a paper was prepared identifying the pros and cons of changing the current election cycles.

**Action** – *Simon Harper*

'Gloucestershire Government' was not thought to be the right name for the combined authority and it was suggested that this should be looked at again. Further small amendments would be made to the 'Proposal for a Combined Authority' document before resubmitting to the DCLG Policy Lead.

**Action** – *Jane Burns*

**d) Climate Change Task Group**

A scrutiny task group set up by the County Council had requested a more explicit commitment in the Devolution bid to mitigating and adapting to the local impact of climate change.

It was recognised that climate change should be reflected in the development of the Devolution proposals and advice would be sought from the Government on the application of the Climate Change Act in areas with devolved powers. A response would be sent to Cllr Sarah Lunnon, Chair of the Climate Change Task Group.

**Action** – *Simon Harper*

**e) Timescales, process and decision-making**

Following the LG meeting, a Devolution briefing would be held for councillors and board members in the Council Chamber at Shire Hall.

The deadline for the first phase of negotiations was Friday, 30 October. The deal document would be drawn up by Mike Wiltshire and Katie Jenkins from BIS. A rehearsal for the challenge session with Greg Clark, Secretary of State, would be held at Shire Hall on Monday, 9 November at 3.45pm. The challenge session itself would be held in London on Wednesday, 11 November at 4pm.

The councils and partners needed to decide what sign-up process they needed to follow based around conversations that had already been held with their members. A number of councils were likely to be holding meetings in the week beginning 16 November ahead of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 25 November. The full content of any deal would not be available and councils would need to make arrangements to delegate detailed decisions to an appropriate individual. As part of the Governance Review, all 10 organisations would be asked to make a decision to join the combined authority in the New Year. Detailed arrangements were due to be put in place in the Spring of 2016.

If everything went forward as planned, a formal announcement by the Government was likely to be made during December.

At the end of the discussion, all of the partners reaffirmed their support for the Devolution bid and their continued willingness to work together to reach a deal for Gloucestershire.

**4 Date of next meeting**

In light of Devolution, to organise additional meetings if required ahead of the next scheduled meeting in March 2016.

**Action** - Jane