



Agenda Item 2 (a)

Time: 9.00 am – 11.00 am

Date: 28 April 2016

Venue: Members' Room

Notes of the meeting of Leadership Gloucestershire held on 31 March 2016

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 DC	
David Hagg	Stroud DC	
Cllr David Norman	Gloucester City Council	Cllr Paul James
Jon McGinty	Gloucester City Council	
Cllr Patrick Molyneux	Forest of Dean DC	
Peter Hibberd	Forest of Dean DC	
Cllr Steve Jordan	Cheltenham BC	
Pat Pratley	Cheltenham BC	
Cllr Christopher Hancock	Cotswold DC	David Neudegg
Cllr Robert Vines	Tewkesbury BC	
Mike Dawson	Tewkesbury BC	
Martin Surl	PCC Office	
Paul Trott	PCC Office	Richard Bradley
Suzette Davenport	Gloucestershire Constabulary	
Mary Hutton	NHS Gloucestershire CCG	Dr Helen Miller Dr Andy Seymour
Diane Savory	GFirst LEP	
David Owen	GFirst LEP	
Jane Burns	Gloucestershire County Council	
Nigel Riglar	Gloucestershire County Council	
Katie Jenkins	Government representative – Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)	
Simon Harper	Gloucestershire County Council	

2 WE ARE GLOUCESTERSHIRE DEVOLUTION BID

2.1 National stocktake

Ten deals had now been signed across the country. The three deals announced as part of the Budget (West of England, East Anglia and Greater Lincolnshire) included significant infrastructure investments and directly elected mayors. The deals did not include detailed information on the 'shopping list' of infrastructure projects as these would be subject to later agreement. The main partners were local authorities with some involvement of local enterprise partnerships.

Some of the earlier deals that had been signed were running into difficulties, notably the North East and D2N2 (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire).

The Government had indicated that the last opportunity for signing a deal allowing for elections in May 2017 would be in May 2016.

2.2 Local position

The combined authority proposal for Gloucestershire remained valid but the Government had given no indication when non-mayoral deals would be signed. Greg Clark, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, had endorsed the content and vision of the proposal during his recent visit to Shire Hall.

It was acknowledged that 75% of the activities were deliverable without a signed deal with the Government. Gloucestershire CCG was moving forward with joint working through its sustainability and transformation plans.

The Government had indicated that there might be an opportunity for a deal to be signed in May but this would have to involve a directly elected mayor. It appeared that the Government was prepared to accept a twin-track approach with Gloucestershire opening a conversation about a directly mayor and Cotswold continuing its bid for unitary status as part of an Oxfordshire deal. A solution would emerge which the Government could sign-up to. Greg Clark was anxious that devolution deals were bespoke to meet the particular needs of individual areas.

2.3 Views of partners

Eight of the partners (GFirst LEP, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Gloucestershire CCG, Forest of Dean DC, Gloucester City, Stroud DC, Tewkesbury BC and the County Council) indicated their willingness to open a conversation with the Government to consider the potential benefits of an elected mayor. It was recognised that an early devolution deal would only be possible if an elected mayor was part of the package.

There had already been challenges from the Government and others around the scale of ambition of the combined authority proposal and there was an opportunity to review what was on the table and what could be added in light of devolution deals elsewhere. If Gloucestershire did not act quickly there was a danger that it would be left behind other areas and critical infrastructure funding would be lost.

The original combined authority proposal included an undertaking to review governance structures within three years.

It was recognised that the following issues would need to be addressed as part of any mayoral deal:

- Identifying the 'shopping list' of infrastructure projects for Gloucestershire.
- Agreement and commitment to a specific level of infrastructure funding over 30 years.
- Understanding the benefits of large infrastructure projects for residents of the county.
- Ensuring that the Government's commitments to the A417 Missing Link and the upgrade to the A46 cross country route were not included in any deal.
- Understanding what the role of a directly elected mayor might look like in Gloucestershire.

Two of the partners (Cheltenham BC and Cotswold DC) were not supportive of opening a conversation with Government at this stage. Cotswold DC recognised the value of a twin-track approach, with separate devolution deals being pursued, but they did not support an elected mayor. Cheltenham BC believed that the process should not be rushed and there should be a broader conversation around all of the options including local government reorganisation. Concern was also expressed about pursuing a deal with the Government when local elections were about to take place in three of the districts alongside the county-wide Police and Crime Commissioner election.

Partners would need to exercise restraint during the Purdah period in the run-up to the local elections and the Police and Crime Commissioner Election, recognising that individuals could make personal comments but not make statements on behalf of Leadership Gloucestershire.

2.4 Next steps

- a) To explore what a mayoral deal for Gloucestershire might look like but recognising that there was no commitment by any partner to agree to an elected mayor.

Action – *Leadership Gloucestershire partners*

- b) To progress those areas of joint working that were not dependent on a signed deal, including opportunities that might arise for district and parish councils to deliver services closer to local communities (so called 'double devolution').

Action – *Leadership Gloucestershire partners*

- c) To request the thematic officer groups established last Summer to review the devolution proposal, including the 'asks' that had been taken off the table by the Government, with a view to reinstating them if they were felt to still be important.

Action – *Thematic group lead officers*

- d) To agree a simple message that could be communicated to the wider membership of partners so that they were aware of the outcome of discussions at Leadership Gloucestershire.

Action – *David Hagg*

3 Next meeting

To arrange an additional meeting before the end of April to review the latest position. A schedule of dates for the rest of the year to be circulated.

Action – *Jane Burns*