

Pre-decision engagement – Summary

The emphasis in the pre-decision phase has been to keep council members and key stakeholders fully apprised of the work being undertaken to develop a Strategic Governance Review and draft Scheme. Discussions have also been held with selected stakeholders to seek their views on the options appraisal which forms part of the review and, ultimately, helps inform the scheme and also to identify opportunities for future discussions to take place should the Councils agree to proceed. Invitations were extended to representatives from the following organisations.

Network Rail, Highways England, Homes & Communities Agency, Environment Agency, VOSCUR, VANS, CVS South Gloucestershire, Business West, UWE, University of Bristol, City of Bristol College, Weston College, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College, Bath College, Bath Spa University, selected transport lobby groups and the Western Training Provider Network.

A short summary of points raised at these discussions is included with this report and has been used to inform the final version of the strategic governance review. In particular changes were included to reflect comments around the following:

- continued joint working with North Somerset
- taking account of cross-boundary skills provision
- scrutiny of LEP funding decisions

Many other comments were already covered in the governance review document and some were more relevant to the scheme (e.g. reference to Public Sector Equalities Duty) and have been used to inform its drafting.

There were also comments related to the operating model for the Mayoral Combined Authority and these have been logged as inputs into the design of that at a later date.

A Business Briefing was provided to LEP members on 16th January. The LEP Executive was briefed on 4th February 2016 and the LEP Executive on 26th February 2016.

A summary of the Strategic Governance Review for three authorities was shared with the LEP Board for comment at their meeting on 16th June. Following discussion the Board noted that:

- North Somerset Council do not agree with the conclusion of the governance review
- Business Representatives supported the conclusions of the governance review
- The LEP supported the conclusions of the governance review

Papers were presented to the West of England Joint Scrutiny on [18th January](#) and [4th March](#) 2016. All joint scrutiny papers are published on the LEP website [here](#).

Work has also been undertaken to keep the general public updated on the progress of the proposed deal.

In addition the following engagement has taken place at a local level:

Bristol City Council

During 2015 two Member briefings were held to introduce the concept of devolution and likely direction of travel and regular dialogue was maintained with the Mayor/Deputy Mayor and Cabinet. The September 2015 submission to HM Government was circulated to all members ahead of the 7th September press announcement.

On announcement of the deal on 16th March a summary was provided to all Members, along with a link to the deal document and press announcements.

All member devolution briefings: 04/04/16, 20/04/16, 26/04/16, 13/06/16, 15/06/16

Following elections in May 2016 a new member email update was provided on 23rd May which included detailed devolution questions and answers and a video presentation of the April member briefing.

Briefings were also offered to each Party Group as follows:

- Liberal Democrats, 21st June 2016
- Conservatives, 21st June 2016
- Labour, 16th June 2016
- Green Party, 22nd June 2016. Briefing given to Devolution Working Group, 8th June 2016
- Meeting with Mayor and Party Group Leaders, 27th June

Devolution was discussed at Bristol City Council Overview and Scrutiny on [4th February 2016](#) and on [15th June](#) 2016, at which it was agreed that a further meeting would be held on 27th June 2016 to consider the Full Council Papers.

A public web page has been created and link shared via Our City citizen newsletter in June, with details of Councillor Finder so that members of the public could share views with councillors pre-decision. The website can be viewed [here](#). There is also an opportunity for members of the public to sign up to receive information about the public consultation proposed for July.

Mayor Ferguson attended the VOSCUR/Festival of Ideas City Devolution and Communities Workshop in March 2015 as a keynote speaker to contribute to their debate on local democracy and city region based devolution.

Internal Communications: Management Briefings on 16 March and 3 May

Bath and North East Somerset

Bath and North East Somerset Council have undertaken 6 Member Briefing sessions to provide information on the West of England Devolution Deal and give an opportunity for members to raise questions and feedback.

All member devolution briefings: 10.11.15, 7.01.16, 11.02.16, 20.04.16, 10.05.16, 20.06.16

A presentation was also provided at the Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on [20th January](#).

A paper was debated at Full Council on [12th May](#) which noted the latest position and invited comments from members in advance of the formal deal being presented to Council in June.

Presentations and briefings have also been undertaken with a number of key stakeholders and partners:

- Presentations to the [Bath and North East Somerset Public Services Board](#) (*a local strategic partnership that includes the universities, police, health, fire, FE, business representation, VCS representation and is chaired by the Council*): 5.10.15, 30.11.15, 9.02.16, 19.04.16, 28.06.16
- Presentation to Parish Liaison Committee: [11.05.16](#)
- Presentation to Bath City Forum: [01.06.16](#)
- Presentation to Voluntary Sector Reference Group (*local group of voluntary sector organisations*): 24.02.16

A public webpage has been created on the Council's website which can be viewed [here](#). A link to the West of England Devolution Briefing is provided as well as a 'Questions and Answers' page.

Regular updates have also been provided internally through the weekly 'Jo Blogs' staff communication and externally to the public through the weekly ['Council Leader's Blog'](#).

South Gloucestershire

South Gloucestershire Council have undertaken 8 Member Briefing sessions since the Chancellor's announcement of the West of England Devolution Deal (3 of these were duplicate sessions). The first of these was a closed briefing and questions session delivered immediately after the closure to the public of the March 2016 Full Council Meeting. Officers have since delivered three sessions (each delivered twice) concentrated on 1) Skills and Employment 2) Planning and Transport 3) Finance and Governance. These briefings were well attended. A final briefing session was delivered to Members on 15 June 2016 summarising the expected content of the Scheme and the papers that Members would receive prior to the Full Council Meeting.

The Chief Executive (Amanda Deeks) has delivered 11 staff briefings open to all employees of the Authority with devolution an integral feature of these briefings.

South Gloucestershire Council has a live engagement on the Council's public website titled 'Devolution'. The relevant pages provide a summary of the deal content and date for Full Council consideration. A link to the deal announced in March is provided alongside two relevant press releases and a link to the engagement 'Share Your Views' submission form. There are a series of FAQs available on the pages.

The public website pages can be viewed [here](#).

Submissions are being collated by the Authority and a summary of those submissions will be provided in report for Members for the Full Council Meeting on 29 June 2016 (with an update note if required).

Devolution Stakeholder Discussion – Summary of Points Raised in discussions

	Summary of Comments	Considerations for Review
Functional Economic Market Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity of re-classifying some of our roads for modern traffic usage. • Promotion of public transport and bus corridors, deterring rat runs • Important for all authorities to work together. • Road accidents occurring on main traffic routes – this needs to be improved • Need to look at the transport network area as a whole. Don't assume the main routes are the right ones. • Would like to align EA medium/long term plans with LEP and UAs. • Funding from Treasury for capital flood defences, EA identifying areas want to put in bids. Need a mechanism which will assess resilience and environmental effects in the bidding process to enable them to integrate capital funding with LEP and UAs to achieve bigger schemes. • Scale of the schemes/challenge will require multiple agencies engagement and commitment to joint investment planning. • Question re dormitory towns in N Somerset accommodating Bristol workforce – explained that c 75/80% of people who live in N Somerset also work there 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keen to be part of the process that delivers sustainable growth to the West of England. • Need mechanisms to assess sustainability and resilience of schemes with both LEP on legacy funding (Growth Deal) and the Combined Authority moving forward with gainshare from Devo deal
Effectiveness of current Economic Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses based in North Somerset and service Bristol – will need to get permits to cross boundaries. • Supportive of a Transport Authority at a strategic level. • 2 sorts of political economies – Rural and Urban. Transport issues are different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bristol want urban solutions to urban problems. • Air pollution due to traffic congestion, no solution to urban transport until do something like Nottingham re. work place parking. • Over 19 education provision and links with Bath City College and the Connecting Families scheme 	
Current Governance Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 authorities should continue working together. • UAs to engage the EA through joint investment planning and resilience work which is supporting the JSP process. • Specifically noted the need to engage with HCA (as land owners and enablers) and Highways England amongst others. • Keen to ensure the voluntary and community sector is organised at West of England level. • Closer working relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Future Governance Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be about communities and providing public services that we control. • Being involved in devolution at this stage will provide future opportunities and allow us to shape arrangements • Importance of agreeing data baselines. • Clarity around what Post 19 means and covers in terms of skills. • Agrees devolution is the best and perhaps only vehicle for cross regional schemes, particularly for future MetroWest plans, but this has to be across all 4 UAs. It does not work across only 3. • Concern an authority could instigate 20mph zones/ residents parking zones in other areas. Loss of democracy, could get overruled. • Concern have no real power over network rail, they need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In transport terms this will not work across 3 authorities, needs to be 4. Should re-negotiate with government. • Concerns around any additional cost of bureaucracy to support evaluation and additional burden to support evaluation • Concern about how cross boundary issues around skills are managed, ie. with Gloucestershire • Urges the 4 UAs to suggest alternative democratic ways of administering the funds so as to retain the unity necessary to attain MetroWest Phases 1, 2 and 3. • CA should have an integrated team of professional strategic officers for transport, looking at planning & delivery. • Keen to ensure the voluntary and community sector is organised at West of England level to assist dialogue with

	<p>to look longer term and fit in with spatial plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to a joint partnership approach- welcomed opportunity to engage on devolution deal and moving forward JSP and infrastructure planning • Clarification sought on scrutiny arrangements. • Assurance that there won't be any drift in terms of powers going from the UAs to the CA. • Engagement of other stakeholders • Closer working relationships with the voluntary sector • Engaging with Town and Parish Councils • Opportunity to involve Voscur in development of detailed balancing criteria (equality and sustainability) in Economic Model. • Concern that a six week public consultation over the summer may not be enough time – explained the deadlines and timeframes from Government • Would hope to involve Neighbourhood Partnerships in consultation • Offer to run information/consultation session through Voscur • Welcomes local decision making • Want to obtain greater certainty from Government that funding can be guaranteed over the next 30 years • Welcome devolved infrastructure funding, multi-year transport funding, devolved further education budget, and the additional powers over public transport, further education, skills and development • Notes the safeguards protecting the autonomy of each constituent Council (in particular the protection of all Council assets and services as well as the veto over 	<p>an elected district mayor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to keep voluntary sector representation on appropriate groups. • Would like to understand more about role of LEP in the future, in particular regarding influence over allocation of budgets • Will need to understand how to involve colleges/providers from outside the area and how future funding arrangements would work • Would wish to see Social Value Policy applied to Combined Authority • Would wish to see Public Sector Equalities Duty applied to Combined Authority • Opportunity to join up thinking when defining Key Route Network to ensure that this integrates with national network • Keen to engage with future discussions to develop details of how this will work in practice • Need to ensure we reflect the voice of local economy and business – how do they have a seat at the table so we can build on what has worked well in the past
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	<p>strategic planning)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question whether additional powers would be granted to in the Deal with regard to moving traffic offences 	
Continuing with current arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific comments recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific comments recorded
Establishing a Joint Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific comments recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific comments recorded
Establishing an Economic Prosperity Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific comments recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific comments recorded
Establishing a Combined Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would only support this with 4 Authorities • Concern that the combined authority would be another layer of bureaucracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be located in Clevedon/ Keynsham or Kingswood
Establishing a Combined Authority with a directly elected Mayor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not support a Mayoral option • Agree with devolution • Would not support this option with just 3 authorities. Has to be 4. • Agreed with this option (may have comments/reservations in relation to the detail) • No concerns with this option • Couldn't see anything working other than this one. Real mistake not to move ahead. Think about national position. • Opportunity to compete for investment. Single voice of elected Mayor gives compelling and inspiring view. • Added momentum to Temple Quarter would be a benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't believe the LEP should have a vote • Stronger if 4 rather than 3 – but no compelling reason not to proceed with 3 and look at opportunities for collaboration. • LEP sector groups – how will this work with three authorities as providers will want to work with all partners but want to have leverage and see benefit of deal with three. • How do we ensure that the CA will take advice from external provides and other key stakeholders – important to engage early on the work with them to ensure CA is appropriately advised (in context of Education & Skills) • Significant benefit offered through opportunity to have decisions agreed and co-ordinated through JTP to give a

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise this would provide a strengthened and balanced governance framework and clear responsibilities• Noted that directly elected Mayor is what gives greater confidence to government to devolve powers and funds to the area• Objection to the aspect of the proposals relating to the creation of a West of England Mayor.• Notes that Metro Mayor and Combined Authority provides the accountability required by Government for devolution of powers and funding. No significant concerns with this model.• Question whether the term “Elected Mayor” had to be used in this context• How to maximise turnout for any election for any elected Mayor	longer term approach
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