

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	8 December 2015
Subject:	Gloucestershire Devolution Project - Update
Report of:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor R J E Vines
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

The Gloucestershire devolution bid was submitted on 4 September 2015. This report gives an update on progress since that date and information on the next steps for the Gloucestershire devolution bid.

Recommendation:

Council is asked to NOTE the report and the current position in respect of the Gloucestershire Devolution Project.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To provide the Council with an update of the progress made with the Gloucestershire Devolution Project.

Resource Implications:

None at this stage.

Legal Implications:

None at this stage.

Risk Management Implications:

None at this stage, risk analysis will be undertaken as the project progresses.

Performance Management Follow-up:

None at this stage.

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 At its meeting on 2 September 2015 Council noted the progress undertaken by

Leadership Gloucestershire in respect of the devolution agenda and resolved to support in principle further development work together with Leadership Gloucestershire Partners.

- 1.2** The purpose of this report is to update the Council in respect of the further progress made since that meeting.

2.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.1** The devolution bid for Gloucestershire was submitted to Government on 4 September 2015 in accordance with the associated deadline. The bid document was circulated to all Members of the Council shortly after submission for information. The bid document is to secure a devolution deal for Gloucestershire based on two main areas, economic growth and public sector reform. Within each area there are two sub workstream areas as follows:

Economic Growth through:

Planning, transport and infrastructure (including housing growth).

Business growth and skills development.

Public Sector Reform in:

Health care commissioning.

Community Safety.

- 2.2** In addition to the specific workstream areas, the bid included a governance workstream which made proposal to establish a combined authority for Gloucestershire.
- 2.3** Since submission, workstream lead officers and work groups, have been in detailed conversation with lead civil servants to develop the respective workstreams to allow an agreement with government to be produced. The bid as submitted was welcomed by government and the Gloucestershire partnership was advised that it may be possible for a devolution deal to be agreed by government for announcement in late November or early December 2015. This was subject to the outcome of a 'Ministerial Challenge' meeting with Greg Clark Secretary of State (SoS) for local government which was held on 11 November 2015.
- 2.4** A small group of representatives from Gloucestershire attended the meeting with the SoS, they were Councillor Mark Hawthorne, Leader of Gloucestershire County Council, Councillor Geoff Wheeler, Leader of Stroud District Council, Diane Savory, Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership, David Owen, Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership and Mike Dawson, Chief Executive. The meeting began with a presentation from the Gloucestershire representatives setting out the devolution bid. A copy of the presentation given is attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 2.5** The meeting was positive and the SoS was supportive of the proposals for Business Growth and Skills, Health Commissioning and Community Safety. However, the SoS has requested that further work be undertaken in respect of the planning and housing elements of the planning transport and infrastructure workstream and the governance workstream.
- 2.6** The civil service lead for the Gloucestershire devolution agreement has indicated that it may possible to conclude the agreement for Gloucestershire in January 2016, subject to the additional work being agreed. He has also advised that a further meeting with the SoS is not likely to be required unless any outstanding issues cannot be resolved.

3.0 The Next Steps

- 3.1** Work is underway to develop the bid further in respect of the two outstanding areas and the latest draft version of this work will be considered by Leadership Gloucestershire on 9 December 2015. The amendments to these elements of the bid will then be discussed with lead civil servants and, once finalised, the bid proposals will be included in the draft devolution agreement to be signed off by the SoS.
- 3.2** Once the devolution agreement has been drafted by civil servants, it will need to be agreed by all partners prior to it being announced by the government. As part of that process, the final draft devolution agreement documentation will be presented to this Council and other partner Councils and boards for approval early in the New Year.
- 3.3** A formal governance review, including public consultation, in respect of the governance options linked to a combined authority will be required. It is planned to undertake this in 2016. However, following the delay in achieving the devolution agreement beyond November/December 2015, the detailed timescale for the governance review needs to be revisited and this matter will be considered by Leadership Gloucestershire on 9 December.
- 3.4** The devolution agenda is a key government policy and there is the potential for further agreements with government in future. This Council's Devolution Working Group will continue to maintain an overview of the process and Members will be kept informed of progress.
- 4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**
- 4.1** None.
- 5.0 CONSULTATION**
- 5.1** Members have been kept advised to date through seminars, briefings and reports. Further consultation and briefing will be undertaken as required.
- 6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**
- 6.1** The Council Plan – devolution proposals will need to support the overall aims of the Council Plan.
- 7.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**
- 7.1** Existing and emerging legislation relating to devolution.
- 8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**
- 8.1** None at this stage.
- 9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**
- 9.1** None.
- 10.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**
- 10.1** None.
- 11.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

11.1 Council decision made 2 September 2015 and referenced in this report.

Background Papers: Gloucestershire Devolution Expression of Interest July 2015.

Gloucestershire Devolution Bid September 2015.

Both documents are available via the Council's website.

Contact Officer: Mike Dawson, Chief Executive Tel: 01684 272001

Email: mike.dawson@teWKesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Ministerial Challenge Presentation.