

WEST OF ENGLAND DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT



Bath & North East
Somerset Council



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Osborne".

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The Rt Hon George Osborne
Chancellor of the Exchequer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N.C. Ashton".

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Councillor Nigel Ashton
Leader of North Somerset Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Clark".

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The Rt Hon Greg Clark
Secretary of State for Communities
and Local Government

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Warren".

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Councillor Tim Warren
Leader of Bath and North East
Somerset Council



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Lord Jim O'Neill
Commercial Secretary to the Treasury

.....
Mayor George Ferguson CBE
Mayor of Bristol City Council

.....
Councillor Matthew Riddle
Leader of South Gloucestershire
Council

.....
Robert Sinclair
Interim Chair of the West of England
LEP

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WEST OF ENGLAND DEVOLUTION AGREEMENT

This document sets out the terms of a proposed agreement between the government and the Bristol Mayor and other Council Leaders of the West of England to devolve a range of powers and responsibilities to a West of England Combined Authority and a new directly elected mayor for the city region. This Devolution Agreement marks the next step in a progressive process of devolution of funding, building on the City Deal (agreed in 2012) and the Growth Deals (agreed in July 2014 and January 2015).

This agreement is directed at building upon the area's successful local economy, to increase its contribution to the national economy and to increase the prosperity of local residents. The city region generates some £30.8 billion in economic output (GVA) and is home to 1.1 million people. The West of England geography closely matches the functional economy of the city region (85 per cent of people that work here also live here). The city region has significant industrial clusters¹ in creative, health, advanced engineering, transport & aerospace, real estate, food & drink, and insurance & financial jobs. There is also a growing cluster around 'low carbon energy' – notably, Bristol was awarded European Green Capital for 2015.

This Devolution Agreement marks the next step in the transfer of resources and powers from central government to the West of England. The West of England will continue to have further devolution dialogue with the government in the future.

¹ <http://www.westofengandlep.co.uk/about-us/strategicplan>

Summary of the proposed Devolution Agreement agreed by the government and the Bristol Mayor and other Council Leaders of the West of England.

A new, directly elected West of England Mayor will act as chair of the West of England Combined Authority and will exercise the following powers and functions devolved from central government:

- Responsibility for a consolidated, devolved local transport budget, with a multi-year settlement.
- The ability to franchise bus services, subject to necessary legislation and local consultation, which will support the Combined Authority's delivery of smart and integrated ticketing.
- Responsibility for a new Key Route Network of local authority roads that will be managed and maintained by the Combined Authority on behalf of the Mayor.
- Powers over strategic planning, including to adopt a statutory spatial development strategy which will act as the framework for managing planning across the West of England region.

The West of England Combined Authority, working with the Mayor, will receive the following powers:

- Control of a new additional £30 million a year funding allocation over 30 years, to be invested in the West of England Single Investment Fund, to boost growth.
- Responsibility for the 19+ Adult Education Budget, which will be devolved from academic year 2018/19.
- Joint responsibility with the government to co-design the new National Work and Health Programme designed to focus on those with a health condition or disability and the very long term unemployed. The West of England Combined Authority will also bring forward a proposal to pilot more intensive support for those furthest from the labour market.

In addition:

- The government will work towards closer cooperation with the West of England Combined Authority on trade and investment services, including joint activities with UKTI.
- The government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to realise the economic potential of the Bristol and Bath Science Park and Food Enterprise Zone at J21 Enterprise Area, and to support the development of the West of England Growth Hub.
- The government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to agree specific funding flexibilities. The joint ambition will be to give the West of England Combined Authority a single pot to invest in its economic growth.

Further powers may be agreed over time and included in future legislation.

Governance

1. This agreement is subject to the formal ratification of the constituent councils of Bristol City Council, Bath & North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council that currently make up the West of England. This agreement is also subject to the statutory requirements including parliamentary approval of the secondary legislation implementing the provisions of this agreement. This agreement protects the integrity of the four existing West of England local authorities.
2. As part of this agreement, the West of England constituent councils will establish a Combined Authority and adopt the model of a directly elected mayor for the area of the West of England Combined Authority. The first election for the directly elected Mayor will be held in May 2017. The strength of the governance arrangements of the mayoral combined authority will be commensurate with the powers of that authority, including all new devolved powers, recognising that strong governance is an essential prerequisite of any devolution of powers to a city region. There is no intention to take existing powers from local authorities without agreement.
3. The directly elected Mayor of the West of England Combined Authority will autonomously exercise new powers. The West of England Combined Authority Mayor will chair the West of England Combined Authority, which will be comprised of the other members of the Combined Authority.
4. The West of England Combined Authority, including the Mayor, will be scrutinised and held to account by the West of England Overview and Scrutiny and Audit committee(s). The West of England Combined Authority Mayor will also be required to consult the West of England Combined Authority on his/her strategies, which it may reject if two-thirds of the constituent council members agree to do so. The West of England Combined Authority will also examine the Mayor's spending plans and will be able to amend his/her plans, if two-thirds of the constituent council members agree to do so.
5. Proposals for decision by the West of England Combined Authority may be put forward by the Mayor or any constituent Member. The Mayor will have one vote as will other voting members. Any questions that are to be decided by the West of England Combined Authority are to be decided by a majority of the members present and voting, subject to that majority including the vote of the Mayor, unless otherwise set out in legislation, or specifically delegated through the Authority's Constitution.
6. This agreement continues to recognise the importance of the LEP and the private sector in the design and delivery of the area's economic growth strategies. As such the West of England Combined Authority Mayor will be a member of the LEP.
7. Any transfer to the West of England Combined Authority of existing powers or resources currently held by the constituent authorities must be by agreement with the relevant authorities, as set out in this document.

Fiscal

8. The West of England Combined Authority will create a Single Investment Fund to deliver an ambitious investment programme across the Combined Authority region to unlock the economic potential of the West of England. The West of England Combined

Authority commits to creating and investing in the Single Investment Fund and prioritising investment based on economic impact. To support this investment approach, government agrees to allocate an additional £30 million per annum of funding for 30 years (50% capital and 50% revenue), which will form part of and maintain the West of England Combined Authority single pot. The fund will be subject to 5-yearly gateway assessments.

9. The government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to agree specific funding flexibilities. The joint ambition will be to give the West of England Combined Authority a single pot to invest in its economic growth. This pot will comprise a flexible, multi-year settlement providing the freedom to deliver its growth priorities, including the ability to re-direct funding to reflect changing priorities, whilst upholding their statutory duties. This local freedom will be over a range of budgets to be determined by the West of England Combined Authority and the government shortly. The Combined Authority will have the flexibility to secure substantial private and public sector leverage. The Combined Authority will also be able to use capital receipts from asset sales as revenue funding for public service transformational initiatives. The government expects to disburse this agreed settlement to the West of England Combined Authority annually in advance.
10. The government commits to discuss the business rates appeals system and general appeals process with the West of England Combined Authority to help ensure the West of England Combined Authority is prepared for ongoing developments within the Business Rates system. The West of England Combined Authority will continue to discuss with the government the proposed business rate reforms and how it will affect the city region.
11. The government will give the West of England Combined Authority Mayor the power to place a supplement on business rates to fund infrastructure, with the agreement of the local business community through the local enterprise partnership, up to a cap of 2p per pound of rateable value.
12. As part of the Bristol and West of England City Deal (agreed in 2012) the government supported the creation of an Economic Development Fund with funding provided by the retention of Business Rates from the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone and the five West of England Enterprise Areas. To enable the ongoing success of this fund the Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas will continue to enjoy their current benefits. These include for the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone and agreed extension to new sites in Bristol, Bath and Somer Valley Enterprise Zone branding and business rates discounts for business moving onto the zone. The Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas will also continue to benefit from 100% growth of business rates retention (from the agreed baseline) for 25 years from their designation with 100% protection from any future reset or redistribution.

Skills (19+)

13. The government will enable local commissioning of outcomes to be achieved from the 19+ Adult Education Budget in academic year 2017/18; and will fully devolve budgets

to the West of England Combined Authority from academic year 2018/19 (subject to readiness conditions). These arrangements do not cover apprenticeships.

14. Devolution will proceed in two stages, across the next three academic years:
 - a. Starting now the West of England Combined Authority will begin to prepare for local commissioning. For the 2017/18 academic year, and following the area review, government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to vary the block grant allocations made to providers, within an agreed framework.
 - b. From 2018/19, there will be full devolution of funding. The West of England Combined Authority will be responsible for allocations to providers and the outcomes to be achieved, consistent with statutory entitlements. Government will not seek to second guess these decisions, but it will set proportionate requirements about outcome information to be collected in order to allow students to make informed choices. A funding formula for calculating the size of the grant to local / combined authorities will need to take into account a range of demographic, educational and labour market factors.
15. The readiness conditions for full devolution are that:
 - a. Parliament has legislated to enable transfer to local authorities of the current statutory duties on the Secretary of State to secure appropriate facilities for further education for adults from this budget and for provision to be free in certain circumstances.
 - b. Completion of the Area Review process leading to a sustainable provider base.
 - c. After the area-reviews are complete, agreed arrangements are in place between central government and the Combined Authority to ensure that devolved funding decisions take account of the need to maintain a sustainable and financially viable 16+ provider base.
 - d. Clear principles and arrangements have been agreed between central government and the West of England Combined Authority for sharing financial risk and managing failure of 16+ providers, reflecting the balance of devolved and national interest and protecting the taxpayer from unnecessary expenditure and liabilities.
 - e. Learner protection and minimum standards arrangements are agreed.
 - f. Funding and provider management arrangements, including securing financial assurance, are agreed in a way that minimises costs and maximises consistency and transparency.
16. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the West of England Combined Authority will discuss how the Advanced Learner Loans system can best support more residents to progress to Level 3+, and better meet the needs of the local labour market.
17. The West of England Combined Authority will assume responsibility for the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE). The AGE funding must be used alongside mainstream apprenticeship participation funding to incentivise employers to offer apprenticeships, but the West of England Combined Authority are free to vary the criteria associated with the grant (e.g. size and sector of business) to meet local needs.

The Skills Funding Agency will work with the West of England Combined Authority to identify an appropriate share.

Skills (16-18)

18. The government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to ensure that local priorities are fed into the provision of careers advice, such that it is employer-led, integrated and meets local needs. In particular, the West of England Combined Authority will ensure that local priorities are fed into provision through direct involvement and collaboration with government in the design of local careers and enterprise provision for all ages, including collaboration on the work of the Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service.

Employment

19. The West of England Combined Authority will work with DWP to co-design the new National Work and Health Programme designed to focus on those with a health condition or disability and the very long term unemployed.
20. The respective roles of DWP and the West of England Combined Authority in the co-design will include:
 - a. DWP sets the funding envelope, the West of England Combined Authority can top up if they wish to, but are not required to.
 - b. The West of England Combined Authority will set out how they will join up local public services in order to improve outcomes for this group, particularly how they will work with the Clinical Commissioning Groups/third sector to enable timely health-based support. There will be a particular focus on ensuring the integration of the new programme with local services, in order to ensure that national and local provision works well together, and opportunities for greater integration are identified and levered.
 - c. DWP set the high-level performance framework and will ensure the support appropriately reflects labour market issues. The primary outcomes will be to reduce unemployment and move people into sustained employment. The West of England Combined Authority will have some flexibility to determine specific local outcomes that reflect local labour market priorities, these outcomes should be complementary to the ultimate employment outcome. In determining the local outcome(s) the West of England Combined Authority should work with DWP to take account of the labour market evidence base and articulate how the additional outcome(s) will fit within the wider strategic and economic context and deliver value for money.
 - d. Before delivery commences, DWP and the West of England Combined Authority will set out an agreement covering the respective roles of each party in the delivery and monitoring of the support, including a mechanism by which each party can raise and resolve any concerns that arise.

- e. DWP to facilitate protocols for data sharing and transparency by tackling some of the obstacles and developing solutions to enable the West of England Combined Authority to develop a strategic needs assessment for the area.
21. The West of England Combined Authority will co-commission the Work and Health programme with DWP. The respective roles of DWP and the West of England Combined Authority will include:
- a. DWP sets the contracting arrangements, including contract package areas, but should consider any proposals from the West of England Combined Authority on contract package area geography.
 - b. The West of England Combined Authority will be involved in tender evaluation.
 - c. Providers will be solely accountable to DWP, but DWP and the West of England Combined Authority's above-mentioned agreement will include a mechanism by which the West of England Combined Authority can escalate to DWP any concerns about provider performance/breaching local agreements and require DWP to take formal contract action where appropriate.
22. Building on the learning from the HYPE programme, the West of England Combined Authority will develop a business case for an innovative pilot to support those who are hardest to help and furthest from the labour market. The business case should set out the evidence to support the proposed pilot, cost and benefits and robust evaluation plans, to enable the proposal to be taken forward as part of the delivery of this agreement, subject to Ministerial approval.

Supporting and attracting business

23. The government will work towards closer cooperation with the city region on trade and investment services, including joint activities with UKTI such as:
- a. Consultation on services and trade missions within an export plan jointly agreed between UKTI and the Combined Authority.
 - b. Ring-fenced trade services resource within the Combined Authority area. Ring-fenced resource remains subject to departmental budget changes.
 - c. Data sharing where practical and feasible on trade and investment specific to the city-region.
 - d. Taking account of the city region's approach to smart specialisation, which places emphasis on the support for trade and investment services in specific sub-sectors identified as having exceptional presence in the city region.
 - e. Appropriate information sharing to ensure aligned mutually supporting activity in day to day activity. Commitment from appropriate UKTI Sector Specialists to engage in a regular dialogue and joint working with Invest Bristol & Bath (IBB) sector specialists.
 - f. Joint governance structure for the city region investment strategy, through six-monthly meetings.

- g. Explore co-location of inward investment operations with UKTI, making full use of the well-established Engine Shed, a city-regional growth hub.
24. On co-location, the government will review the Inward Investment resource location of regional (IST) staff across the three levels of: Partnership Managers; Business development and Key Account Management teams, currently in 8 locations nationally. The government will also look at options for co-location, under UKTI/IST management, without harming the overall efficiency of the working of the investment model.
25. There will be a strengthened partnership between locally delivered services and UKTI, with a joint governance structure including six-monthly meetings attended by a Director level representative from UKTI and the West of England Combined Authority. These will provide a forum to discuss progress on inward-investment team co-location, and on account management activity by both parties in the region. This structure will wherever possible be used to review key decisions and initiatives planned and/or implemented by both parties, including building a better shared understanding of the inward investment opportunities available in the region.
26. The government will explore what options exist for using a portion of GREAT campaign budget for overseas based activity aligned to City Region sector strengths with delivery managed by UKTI Marketing teams with input from the West of England Combined Authority. This activity should be supported by sector based resource in overseas posts who have been specially briefed to have a strong understanding of the West of England Combined Authority sector strengths.
27. The West of England Combined Authority will work with government and their neighbouring regions to develop a regional co-ordinating function for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) activities. This will lever the existing capacity of Invest Bristol & Bath and its well established FDI based partnerships with neighbouring areas.
28. The government commits to working with the West of England Combined Authority and local partners to realise the economic potential of the Bristol and Bath Science Park and the Junction 21 Enterprise Area Food Enterprise Zone.
29. The government agrees to continue to develop and deliver, in collaboration with the West of England Combined Authority, the joint programme to drive commercial rollout of superfast broadband, particularly in rural areas of the city region.
30. The government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to support the development of the West of England Growth Hub, so that it joins-up and co-ordinates public, private, third sector, national and local support to ensure new and existing businesses access the help they need to boost their productivity and grow.
31. The West of England will work with partners, including government, to develop a strategic approach to regulatory delivery. To build on the Better Business for All national programme, overcoming regulatory barriers and supporting local priorities for growth and reform.

Energy

32. The government recognises the tidal range of the Severn Estuary has the potential to make a significant contribution to the UK's electricity generation from an indigenous renewable source. The government has launched a review to assess the strategic case for tidal lagoons and whether they could represent value for money for the consumer. The government welcomes the West of England establishing cross-regional governance (in conjunction with South Wales) responsible for developing a Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel Energy Strategy.

European funding

33. The government is committed to working with the West of England Combined Authority to achieve Intermediate Body status for the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund. The government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to agree how to delegate powers to select projects on the basis of strategic fit with operational programmes and local conditions. This will allow the West of England to integrate and align investments with other aspects of the devolution deal, to select projects for investment, to improve performance and maximise economic impact.

Housing and planning

34. The West of England is committed to the delivery of high quality, planned, sustainable growth and is leading the way on a strategic approach to regional planning through its emerging Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) and Joint Transport Plan (JTP).
35. The West of England Combined Authority will set an ambitious target for delivering new homes which will be supported by the planning powers detailed below. The housing target will be set out in the West of England Joint Spatial Plan for the period from 2016 to 2036. The West of England will bring forward the Joint Spatial Plan for submission in summer 2017 and this will be subject to an examination in public to ensure it is sound being and undertaken by an independent inspector appointed by the Secretary of State in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
36. The West of England authorities will bring forward a Joint Transport Plan by the end of 2017 followed by a strategic infrastructure delivery plan which identifies infrastructure needed to deal with both the current deficit and Joint Spatial Plan generated requirements, and proposals to fund this through devolved infrastructure funds and other appropriate programmes.
37. The West of England Combined Authority will work with government and its agencies to co-invest in new homes, accelerating the unlocking of barriers to growth, and plan and prioritise investment in associated infrastructure (including transport, schools and health).
38. The Joint Spatial Plan will provide the higher level strategic planning policy framework for each Unitary Authority's local plan reviews. All planning authorities in the West of

England commit to bringing forward up to date Local Plans in line with this overall strategic framework.

39. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will acknowledge the weight of the West of England Joint Strategic Plan and the four respective local plans as the basis of a comprehensive plan-led approach. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government will assist, where possible, in streamlining planning processes so that once the Joint Strategic Plan is in place Local Plans can be rapidly adopted.
40. To improve public confidence in both strategic planning and the planning delivery system for sustainable growth, the government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to enable a strategic approach to a five year housing supply. This would support local authorities when resisting speculative development appeals.
41. The West of England Combined Authority Mayor will exercise strategic planning powers to support and accelerate these ambitions. These will include powers to:
 - a. Adopt a statutory spatial development strategy, which will act as the framework for managing planning across the West of England region, and for the future development of Local Plans. The spatial framework will need to be approved by unanimous vote of the members appointed by constituent councils of the Combined Authority.
 - b. Create supplementary planning documents and a single viability appraisal process, subject to the approval process in paragraph 41a.
 - c. Be consulted on and/or call-in planning applications identified as being of potential strategic importance in the West of England.
 - d. Prepare, submit and determine planning applications for agreed schemes.
 - e. Undertake land assembly and compulsory purchase; and to form joint ventures with landowners, developers and Registered Providers.
 - f. Create Mayoral Development Corporations, with planning and land assembly powers, which will support delivery of strategic sites in the West of England region. This power will be exercised with the consent of the appropriate Members in which the development corporation is to be used.
42. To support delivery of these commitments the West of England Combined Authority and government agree to:
 - a. Review all land and property (including surplus property and land) held by the public sector to better enable strategic infrastructure and housing priorities to be realised.
 - b. The government will work with the West England to support the operation of the Joint Assets Board, and support better coordination on asset sales. This will include ensuring the representation of senior HMG officials on the Joint Assets Board, using that Board to develop as far as possible and consistent with the government's overall public sector land target, a joint programme of public sector asset disposal. The Joint Assets Board will identify barriers to delivery and develop solutions to address those barriers to help the West of England Combined

Authority meet its housing goals and to unlock more land for employment use.

- c. A strong partnership to support key large housing sites (1,500 homes +) and joint action to deliver early on starter homes. The government and associated agencies will work in partnership with the area's local authorities to help resolve barriers with utility companies or government agencies, and invest in suitable land. The government and the West of England Combined Authority will continue discussions on the principle of securing longer term frameworks for funding of key sites, subject to the development of a full business case, meeting our value for money and other funding criteria.
43. Support the West of England in the development of proposals for ambitious reforms in the way that planning services are delivered, and which could enable greater flexibility in the way that fees are set, with a particular focus on proposals which can streamline the process for applicants and accelerate decision making.

Transport

44. The directly elected Mayor of the West of England will:

- a. Take responsibility for a devolved and consolidated local transport budget, with a multi-year settlement. Functions will be devolved to the Combined Authority accordingly, to be exercised by the Mayor.
- b. Have the ability to franchise bus services in the city region, subject to necessary legislation and local consultation. This will be enabled through a specific Buses Bill which will provide for the necessary functions to be devolved. This will support the Combined Authority's ambitions in delivering a high quality bus network and in enhancing the local bus offer. This includes the delivery of smart and integrated ticketing, local branding and provision of minimum standards across the network.
- c. Take responsibility for a Key Route Network of local roads, which will be defined and agreed by the constituent local authorities, and will be managed and maintained at a city region level, by conferring highway and traffic management powers on the Combined Authority once it is in place. The management, maintenance and improvement of the Key Route Network will be supported by devolving all relevant local roads maintenance funding as part of the Mayor's consolidated, multi-year local transport budget. This will also support the delivery of a single asset management plan for the local authority network across the Combined Authority area, and streamlined contractual and delivery arrangements.

45. In addition and as part of the deal:

- a. In establishing the Combined Authority, appropriate² local transport functions will be conferred to the Combined Authority and exercised by the Mayor. In

² In establishing the Combined Authority, responsibility for an area-wide local transport plan, public transport functions and the Key Route Network part of the local authority road network will be conferred to the Combined Authority and exercised by the Mayor.

addition, a new single policy and delivery body will be created covering the same area in order to determine, manage and deliver the Mayor's transport plans and the delivery of an integrated public transport network for the city region.

- b. To support better integration between local and national networks, the government and the West of England Combined Authority will enter into joint working arrangements with Highways England and Network Rail on operations, maintenance and local investment through a new Memorandum of Understanding.
- c. The West of England Combined Authority will bring forward alternative proposals for the management of current and new rail stations in the Combined Authority area (i.e. the areas of the constituent councils). If any of these proposals would lead to the transfer of any rail station or infrastructure assets to the Combined Authority, the Combined Authority will be obliged to bring forward a business case for consideration by the government.
- d. The Combined Authority Shadow Board will bring forward proposals that would enable the Mayor and Combined Authority to implement Clean Air Zones in the Combined Authority area. This will help achieve Air Quality Plan objectives at both the national and local level.
- e. The government will work with the West of England Combined Authority to establish any appropriate local traffic and highway powers to be conferred on to the Mayor as part of the Key Route Network.

Under this geography

- 46. The Mayor for the West of England will be elected by the local government electors for the areas of the constituent councils of the West of England Combined Authority. The West of England Mayor and West of England Combined Authority will exercise the powers and responsibilities described in this document in relation to its area, i.e. the area of the constituent councils of the West of England Combined Authority.
- 47. Additional funding or budgets that are devolved as a result of this agreement will go to the West of England Combined Authority, to be exercised by the West of England Mayor or Combined Authority as set out in this document.
- 48. The West of England Combined Authority must exercise functions in relation to its geographical area.
- 49. Under the West of England Mayor model, it is not expected that the role of the LEP or private sector would be lessened.

West of England Combined Authority commitments

- 50. The West of England Combined Authority is accountable to local people for the successful implementation of the devolution deal; consequently, the government expects the West of England Combined Authority to monitor and evaluate their deal in order to demonstrate and report on progress. The Cities and Local Growth Unit will

work with the West of England Combined Authority to agree a monitoring and evaluation framework that meets local needs and helps to support future learning.

51. The West of England Combined Authority will be required to evaluate the additional £30 million per annum of funding for 30 years, which will form part of and capitalise the West of England Combined Authority single pot. The £30 million per annum fund will be subject to:
- a. Gateway assessments for the £30 million per annum scheme. The West of England Combined Authority and the government will jointly commission an independent assessment of the economic benefits and economic impact of the investments made under the scheme, including whether the projects have been delivered on time and to budget. This assessment will be funded by the West of England Combined Authority, but agreed at the outset with the government, and will take place every five years. The next five year tranche of funding will be unlocked if the government is satisfied that the independent assessment shows the investment to have met the objectives and contributed to national growth.
 - b. The gateway assessment should be consistent with the HM Treasury Green Book, which sets out the framework for evaluation of all policies and programmes, and where relevant with the more detailed transport cost-benefit analysis guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT). The assessment should also take into account the latest developments in economic evaluation methodology.
 - c. The government would expect the assessment to show the activity funded through the scheme represents better value for money than comparable projects, defined in terms of a Benefit to Cost ratio.
52. The West of England Combined Authority will work with the government to develop a full implementation plan, covering each policy agreed in this deal, to be completed ahead of implementation. This plan will include the timing and proposed approach for monitoring and evaluation of each policy and should be approved by the DCLG Accounting Officer.
53. The West of England Combined Authority will agree overall borrowing limits and capitalisation limits with the government and have formal agreement to engage on forecasting. The West of England Combined Authority will also provide information, explanation and assistance to the Office for Budget Responsibility where such information would assist in meeting their duty to produce economic and fiscal forecasts for the UK economy.
54. The West of England Combined Authority will agree a process to manage local financial risk relevant to these proposals and will jointly develop written agreements with the government on every devolved power or fund to agree accountability between local and national bodies on the basis of the principles set out in this document.
55. The West of England Combined Authority will continue to adhere to their public sector equality duties, for both existing and newly devolved responsibilities.