

How many officers will be needed to deliver the Mayor's functions?

Most of them already exist. Many existing officers will pick up roles under the Mayor e.g. an existing Chief Officer will be responsible for the Mayor's Office. As services fuse, they will work under a different chain of command. There will not be more officers delivering services. There will be a small number of officers in the Mayor's Office.

Parishes frequently hear that Councils are short of staff. Will this change under Devolution?

There will be a need to rationalise services so there are no duplications. This process will also address areas where there are deficiencies. While many areas provide high levels of service, it is accepted that there are issues that need to be addressed.

Will the Mayor have an office?

Yes. The cost needs to be seen in the context of the potential benefits the Mayor will bring.

Who are the likely candidates for the Mayor?

These have not yet emerged. The nomination process will be the same as for any other election. Parties will select their own candidates.

Does the Mayor have to be a politician?

Not necessarily.

Do parishes need to start work now on identifying the needs of their areas? If so what should they focus on?

Initially we are asking Parishes to promote the Devolution consultation and to respond themselves. (see also subsequent references to Neighbour Plans).

What is the deadline for the consultation?

23rd August 2016.

Will Devolution be cost neutral?

The Devolution deal provides additional money. If the Mayor wants to change the cost base, the electorate will need to be consulted. See also references to funding in the attached documents.

What should Parishes be working on?

Providing evidence of needs and projects that will meet them e.g. Neighbourhood Plan. This will enable the Combined Authority to carry out research and, subject to the outcome, submit projects to the Mayor for support.

Will the Combined Authority have precepting powers?

Yes, but they will be capped. This will be part of candidates' manifestos. In addition, the Mayor will be able to intercept local taxes before they reach central government e.g. business rates.

Grants to councils are declining, so what is the net gain?

There will be a net gain – see the attached documents. All the money is new. Councils will lose grant funding anyway and the only way to recoup it will be through Devolution.

Will co-operation by police and fire with forces in other counties be affected?

The Mayor will not be responsible for these functions under the current proposals. This may happen in the future.

Is there a need to clarify the role of the Mayor?

Yes. The Mayor will be different from the existing ceremonial mayors that towns currently have. The Mayor's role is set out in the attached documents.

How will the constituent local authorities reach agreement?

There will be a formal Cabinet comprising the Leaders of all the Councils, who will have to reach agreements through negotiation.

Will that undermine the overall Strategy?

Projects will be weighed against Strategies. Importantly the Strategies will be set locally rather than by central government as at present.

What are the governance and accountability arrangements?

There will be comprehensive governance arrangements including a scrutiny function Chaired by a councillor who is not politically aligned to the Mayor; published strategies, public decision-making and publication of Minutes. A constitution is being developed. Practices at existing combined authorities will be drawn on.

Currently government specialists manage the functions that will be devolved. Will it be necessary to recruit similar specialists to perform the same function locally at significant cost?

The councils already have specialists in the devolved functions (e.g. education, planning) who will carry out the work, so this will not be necessary.

Is the allocation of funds equivalent to that in other areas?

It is the biggest per capita deal to date. There are likely to be more deals in the future. The Mayor can take decisions on funding as outlined above and subsequently.

Have the measures of success been determined? Will they be published? What period do they cover? If they are not met, how will the Combined Authority be wound up?

Are number of work streams are being worked on. This is assisted by government consultants and will include measures of success. They will be published later this year. There will be a contract with the government. It will be for the government to take action, otherwise, the Mayor will be responsible locally for making sure the Combined Authority meets its objectives.

What if there is a change of party in government during the life of the contract?

The contract will bind future governments for its life of 30 years.

How will parishes fit in? Will they go straight to the Mayor?

Their position will be unchanged. They will still have a relationship with the District Council. Importantly, it is intended to establish significantly improved relationships between the District Council and Town and Parish Councils. There will be considerably greater engagement and a new Executive Councillor position has been established for this purpose. Under this new relationship, towns and parishes will have more contact with the Leader of the District Council who will sit on the Combined Authority Cabinet thereby providing a direct link to the Mayor.

Will powers be transferred up to the Mayor?

The Devolution agreement only involves the transfer of powers down from the government.

Will the Mayor negotiate with the Treasury over funding?

Yes; moreover, the Mayor will be an advocate for the area who makes contact with public and private sources of investment anywhere in the world to attract them to the area. This is not something that currently takes place.

When new development takes place, it places extra demands on local facilities provided by Parish Councils. Will future developments provide funding for these facilities?

There will be a need for early engagement on such matters to plan ahead. See reference to Neighbourhood Plans above. Facilities such as crematoria will need to be included,

Is Devolution a lost opportunity to address fundamental issues associated with local government such as the two-tier structure?

There is no specific reference to this in the draft agreement but there will be a mechanism that will allow it to happen.

Will the cost of Devolution be referred to in the Council Tax booklet next year?

This will depend on what happens in November.

Will the Devolution consolation constitute consent to development at RAF Wyton?

The Devolution agreement only refers to a river crossing. The development at RAF Wyton will be consulted on as part of the Local Plan process next year.

Where is the money coming from?

It is new money from Central Government.

Will the money be used to protect against services being cut?

Yes, there will be better co-operation and efficiencies, which will mean cuts will not be needed to the levels previously expected.

Are there examples of Devolution agreements in similar rural areas?

There are some in the North-East and a number currently being negotiated. To an extent areas are defined as viable because of their economic output and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has one of the highest outputs in the UK.

What will happen after five years and the £70m has been used?

There will be annual checkpoints to test progress against targets and money will be released as appropriate. Negotiations will start on subsequent deals once the current one has been completed.

Guidance indicates that Mayors can raise a precept if the legal Order includes provision for this. Does the draft Order for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough include such provision?

This is part of the negotiations but the Mayor will need a mandate to do this.