What is devolution?

Devolution is the granting of powers and funding from Central Government to local areas. It enables decision-making and resources to be managed locally. It involves the creation of a new Combined Authority, chaired by a Directly Elected Mayor.

It is an ongoing process which has gained momentum following the Scottish independence referendum and Greater Manchester’s devolution agreement in November 2014.

In May 2015, the Government announced its intention to bring forward legislation to support the English devolution process. The Queen’s Speech included a draft Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill that made provision for further devolution of powers within England. This became an Act in January 2016.

Has there been devolution anywhere else in England?

Yes. London has had a devolved authority for many years, and Greater Manchester reached an agreement in November 2014. Subsequently Cornwall, Sheffield City Region, the North East and Tees Valley have secured devolution deals to date. It is clear that devolution deals evolve once an initial commitment is made.

Why do we need devolution?

Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough we face major challenges:

- We need to accelerate the economic success of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- We need to build new homes that meet a mix of housing needs
- Our transport systems need substantial investment and stronger integration
- We have skills shortages in key areas that businesses need
- We have a growing and aging population which generates a major financial challenge

A devolution deal means that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will be able to make its own decisions about Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, rather than them being made by Central Government.

As part of a Combined Authority we would have greater control and influence over certain powers, resources and funding that currently sit with Government. This would enable us to drive economic growth and invest more in our infrastructure, people and communities.

A devolution deal would mean that we have the power and resources to tackle our challenges and make the most of future opportunities.

Who is in the Combined Authority?

Government also says in order to secure a devolution deal, and the decision making powers and funding that come with it, there must be a combined local authority (LINK TO LGA) with a single person in charge, usually referred to as a mayor. The suggestion is that the mayor will be directly elected.
The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough proposal includes forming a Combined Authority that would include the following organisations – Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership.

If this was agreed – would all council services be delivered by a Combined Authority?

Devolution would offer partners in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough deal greater decision making powers on key issues that affect our communities such as infrastructure, growth, house building, jobs and skills.

Cambridgeshire County Council would keep its sovereignty and continue to deliver the vast majority of services for residents as we do currently – even if we are part of a Combined Authority.

What powers are you proposing that a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority would have?

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (including the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership), chaired by a Directly Elected Mayor, would receive the following powers:

- Control of a new additional £20 million a year funding allocation over 30 years to boost growth
- Control of a new £170 million ring-fenced fund to deliver an ambitious target of new homes over a five year period – this includes £70 million for Cambridge which the City Council has indicated would be spent on new Council housing.
- Responsibility for chairing an area-based review of 16+ skills provision
- Co-designing with Government a new National Work and Health programme designed to focus on those with a health condition or disability and the very long-term unemployed.

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

A new directly elected Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mayor would act as chair to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and could exercise the following powers and functions devolved from Central Government:

- Responsibility for a multi-year devolved transport budget
- Responsibility for an identified key route network of local authority roads
- Powers over strategic planning, the responsibility to create a non-statutory spatial framework for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and to develop with Government a Land Commission.

How will decisions be made?

In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough devolution would involve creating an organisation known as the Combined Authority. Residents will elect a Mayor who would chair the Combined Authority.

The Combined Authority would be made up of a councillor from each of our councils and a business representative from the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Powers and funding will be transferred from Central Government – and would become the responsibility of the Combined Authority and the Directly Elected Mayor.

There are proposals for how the Combined Authority and Directly Elected Mayor would take decisions. Each member
of the Combined Authority including the Mayor has one vote.

Decision making would follow the principles below:

- The Directly Elected Mayor cannot make decisions alone and will require the support of a certain number of members of the Combined Authority to progress their proposals, or in certain circumstances the business community.
- Some decisions, such as how much money the Combined Authority wishes to borrow, asking the Government for new powers and how much the authority would cost to run would require a majority of members to agree. That majority must include the Directly Elected Mayor.

Full details can be found in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough devolution proposal document but decisions will be made using the following principles:

### How would the Combined Authority be held to account?

In a number of ways including the following:

- An independent scrutiny committee that has the power to ask the Mayor and other members of the Combined Authority to attend a meeting to answer questions. This would be made up of councillors from participating councils who are not members of the Combined Authority itself. The exact details are being worked up.
- The scrutiny committee having the power to review any of the decisions made by the Combined Authority.
- An audit committee which would keep an eye on the Combined Authority’s finances.
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough electors being able to directly elect their Mayor through the ballot box.
- The Combined Authority will be open and transparent – where it’s expected that most decisions will be made in public.
- A Government assessment every five years on the performance of the Combined Authority.

### Why do we need to elect someone, like a mayor, to chair a Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough?

The Government has made it clear that in return for more powers, resources and funding being devolved to combined authorities, that they will agree to elect a mayor who would work in partnership with local politicians. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would establish a Combined Authority and introduce a Directly Elected Mayor with first elections in 2017.

### So what happens next?

- A period of full public consultation will take place in July and August.
- **July to October** - development of governance model, government approval and Full Council commitment to arrangements to form a Combined Authority.
- **November to December** - legislative process to establish Combined Authority and mayoral election.
- A shadow Combined Authority would operate until May 2017.
- A Mayor for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough would be elected in May 2017.