Dear Jacob

**Re. Wiltshire’s MPs support devolution to Wiltshire Council**

We would like to underline our support for devolution to Wiltshire Council, with the principal benefits being broader skills and transport powers, along with flexibilities which will help to deliver our other ambitions for the county.

Wiltshire Council has recently had success in securing an orderly transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership functions to Wiltshire, supported by Swindon. We are now keen to take the skills and growth agenda further forward in the county and believe this can be achieved through a devolution deal at Level 2 of the government’s levelling up framework.

Skills powers and funding will strengthen the council’s close working arrangements with Wiltshire College and provide a real opportunity to further support the delivery of local initiatives such as TechTrowbridge. Retaining the funding at national level will fragment delivery and inhibit join up with initiative already being delivered by the council, such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Multiply programme and the DfE Skills Bootcamp programme.

Wiltshire Council has also been developing a Community Conversation’ model as a unique approach to levelling up areas of deprivation, focusing on making use of what a community already has (such as existing organisations and resources) and using these things to make the area better for the people who live there, with long term commitment and support from the council.

The council also has ambitious plans to remodel and improve support for tourism and the visitor economy; and to market the area for inward investment on the basis of a new local economic strategy.

Devolution to Wiltshire would be consistent with the recent ‘Level 2’ devolution deal announced for Devon, which was not contingent on a whole county/functional economic area geography (lacking the participation of Plymouth City Council), and which also received some additional capital funding normally reserved for ‘Level 3’ mayoral deals in the framework outlined in the Levelling Up White Paper.

We note that the Autumn statement committed to ‘*expand Level 2 devolution to eligible councils across England that represent a whole county or functional economic area*’ and that discussions have been underway with Somerset and others on this basis. Wiltshire Council is similar in size and status to Somerset and as such we hope we can count on your support to deliver this proposal.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Murrison