EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE CORONERS' DISTRICT ORDER 2006

2006 No. 544

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Constitutional Affairs and is laid before the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty.

2. Description

2.1 This instrument seeks to amalgamate the two coroner's districts in the county of Gloucestershire (Gloucester and Cheltenham) into one district to be named Gloucestershire.

3. Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments

3.1 None.

4. Legislative Background

4.1 Under section 4(2) of the Coroners Act 1988 local authorities have powers to submit to the Secretary of State, draft orders for alterations to coroners' districts within England and Wales, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Coroners (Orders as to Districts) Rules 1927 as to advertising their intentions. The coroners' districts within Gloucestershire were established in 1974 (SI 1974 No 368) at the time of local government changes made under the Local Government Act 1972. The Secretary of State has power under section 4(2) of the 1988 Act to make such changes to the draft order submitted by the Council as he thinks fit and has done so in making this order.

5. Extent

5.1 This instrument applies to England and Wales.

5.2 It affects only the County of Gloucestershire.

6. European Convention on Human Rights

6.1 As the instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend Primary legislation, no statement is required.

7. Policy background

7.1 The Home Office was responsible for coroner law and policy until the transfer of these responsibilities to the Department for Constitutional Affairs on 1 June 2005. It was a long established Home Office policy that coroners' districts should be amalgamated in order to create larger part-time or full-time districts. This was both to enable the coroners' service to benefit from any economies of scale and to give the coroner concerned greater experience in dealing with sudden deaths. The Department for Constitutional Affairs intends to continue this policy. The new district of Gloucestershire is expected to have about 2,000 reported deaths a year.

8. Impact

8.1 A Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as it has no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

9. Contact

Brian Patterson at the Department for Constitutional Affairs Tel: 020 7340 6675 or e-mail: brian.patterson@dca.gsi.gov.uk can answer any queries regarding the instrument.