

North East Devolution Consultation

Northumberland Local Area Councils



What we will cover

- What is devolution?
- What is in the deal?
- What is the governance review?
- Why we are consulting?
- The timeline and next steps

What is devolution?

Devolution is the transfer of power and authority from central government to local decision makers.

The North East has already seen devolution with the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA), formed in 2018 covering Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland.

The local authorities of County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland also work closely together through the North East Combined Authority (NECA) to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, though NECA does not have devolved powers.

Background

The deal put forward, which the government has confirmed it is 'minded to' approve, will see NECA and NTCA cease to operate, with a new combined authority formed to cover the seven local authority areas of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland.

The new combined authority would be headed up by a Metro mayor, who we expect to be elected in May 2024. Metro mayors are directly elected by residents of the Combined Authority's geographical area covering multiple local councils, e.g. Andy Burnham – Greater Manchester Combined Authority, or Ben Houchen – Tees Valley.

What is in the deal for the region?

The deal on the table would bring significantly more power and money to the region than the two existing authorities have at the moment.

It would not impact on the existing local authorities in the region, and they would continue to provide the services they do currently.

The deal offers a potential £4.2bn of investment into the region over 30 years, made up of a number of different elements.

What is in the deal for the region?

- 1. Transport** –strategic investment in bus, metro, active travel and infrastructure with full powers to oversee integrated transport and better connectivity for our communities and businesses
- 2. Investment Fund** – a significant fund supported by an investment plan driving inclusive economic growth, net zero and addressing inequalities
- 3. Skills, Education & Inclusion** – Funding towards expanding adult education provision, with focus on inclusion and employability.
- 4. Housing, Land & Digital Infrastructure** – devolved housing powers & expansion of brownfield funding, as well as additional regeneration to improve communities, in conjunction with local authorities, and get more sustainable housing and digital infrastructure built

What is in the deal for the region?

- 5. Clean Energy & Net Zero** – measures to unlock potential and increased investment in our major industries, businesses and infrastructure to support clean energy and net zero transition – including a unique ‘Green Superport’ model
- 6. Rural Economy & Sustainability** – clear focus on rural growth and stewardship, including a specific rural investment plan and focus on food security, biodiversity and nature gain
- 7. Culture, Tourism and Place** – opportunity to collectively utilise and enhance the region’s greatest assets and partnerships eg iconic coastal locations and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, sporting institutions and major events to generate further inward investment.
- 8. Health & Public Service Reform** – tackling inequalities by including measures to drive innovation in prevention, healthy housing, and social care collaboration

Financial breakdown

- **Investment fund - £48m per year**
- **Skills and adult education - £60m per year**
- **Transport – more than £900m**
- **Housing and regeneration - £69m**
- **Mayoral Capacity Fund - £30m**
- **Other - various**
- **Total - £4.2bn**

What is the governance review?

The seven local authorities have carried out a review to explore whether a new combined authority for the region would be beneficial to the North East.

It concluded:

- New combined authority would benefit economic growth and delivery of public services.
- The new authority would extend the benefits of devolved funding for investment, skills and housing, previously secured by the North of Tyne, over the full regional geography. It would also unlock new funding and powers, including over transport, across the whole region.
- Unlikely existing governance arrangements could be meaningfully strengthened without adopting the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) model of governance.
- A change is required to enable the North East authorities to pursue their economic and social policy agenda at greater pace.

The consultation

Public consultation on the devolution deal began on 26 January 2023, and will run until 23 March 2023.

There are a number of ways in which you can have your say and you will find details of these on your local authority's website.

The views of residents, businesses, charities and other organisations will be essential in ensuring the new MCA delivers the best outcomes for all of its constituents.

What this means for Northumberland

Northumberland County Council will continue to run the services it does at present, while having membership of the new Mayoral Combined Authority. It will remain responsible for bin collections, libraries, and all other existing local authority services.

Devolution will not impact on the way the council operates, and there will be no direct changes to jobs as a result of the formation of the new MCA.

Timeline and next steps

28 December 2022 – Government announced devolution deal it is ‘minded to’ approve.

19 January 2023 – All seven Cabinets of local authorities approved to move to public consultation.

23 January – Public consultation begins and runs until 23 March

Post consultation – Consultation feedback is reviewed and individual councils to decide whether or not to proceed. If all agree, a summary of the consultation is prepared and, once approved by Cabinets, submitted to Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities. Secretary of State will then decide if the statutory criteria have been met and whether the relevant authorities have given the necessary consents, before making the statutory order to create the new mayoral combined authority.

May 2024 – New North East Mayoral Combined Authority formed and election held to appoint Metro mayor.

Thank you

