

Devolution and Levelling Up

Sustain webinar: What does the levelling up white paper mean for food partnerships?

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Overview

- Context: Local government and English devolution
- Analysis: Headlines from the White Paper
- Reflections: Where do we go from here?

Context



Governance of the UK

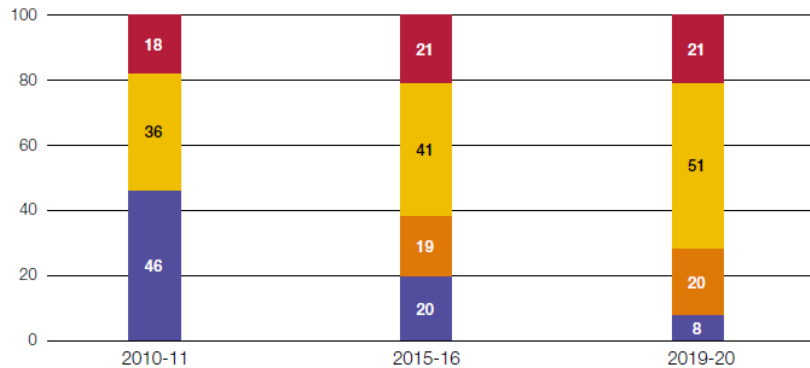
- UK Government based in Westminster, highly centralised by comparable international standards:
 - In **Scotland**, a list of matters reserved to the UK Government is explicitly listed in the Scotland Act 1998 (and amended by the Scotland Acts of 2012 and 2016). Any matter not explicitly listed in the Act is implicitly devolved to the Scottish Parliament e.g. **Health, Housing, Education, Justice, Taxation**
 - In **Wales**, a list of matters reserved to the UK Government is explicitly listed under the provisions of the Wales Act 2017. Any matter not explicitly listed in the Act is implicitly devolved to the Welsh Parliament e.g. **Education, Health and Social Care, Some Taxes**
 - In **Northern Ireland**, arrangements are slightly different and powers are divided into three categories: **Transferred Powers**, which are those controlled by the Northern Ireland Assembly e.g. Agriculture, Education, Transport; **Reserved Powers**, which remain in Westminster, but might be transferred at a later date e.g. Prisons; and, **Excepted Powers**, which cannot be transferred without new laws in Westminster e.g. elections, defence
 - In **England** there is no national devolution, but a spread of subnational ‘devolution deals’

Local government in England

- No constitutional protection
- Councils provide more than 800 public services – with 1,200 legal duties
 - Children, vulnerable adults, cultural services
 - Highways, transport, housing and the environment
- In some parts of non-metropolitan England, these functions are split:
 - District/borough councils (housing, planning etc.)
 - County councils (adult social care, waste disposal)
- In metropolitan areas these functions are delivered by a single authority (unitary)
- In City Regions, such as London and Greater Manchester these local delivery functions are supported by sub-national strategic authorities
 - Greater Manchester Combined Authority
 - Greater London Authority
- At the very small scale there are 9,000 parish councils
- Stats: 20,000 councillors, over 2 million employees, ~£50 billion expenditure p/a

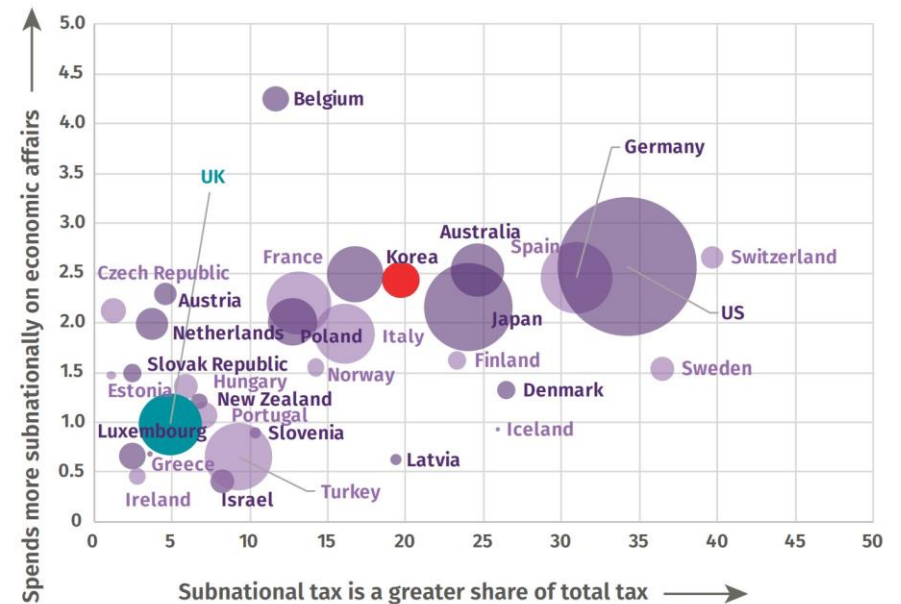
Local government finance

Percentage of revenue income (excluding direct schools funding and grants outside aggregate external finance)



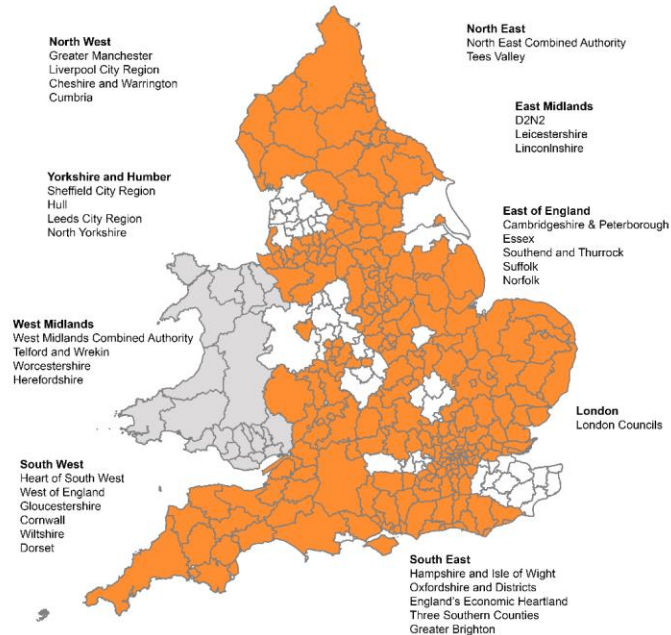
- Sales, fees and charges (estimate)
- Council tax
- Business rates (locally retained)
- Government grant (including nationally redistributed business rates)

Subnational tax as a per cent of total tax (X axis); subnational government expenditure on economic affairs as a per cent of GDP (Y axis); bubble size=population¹⁵

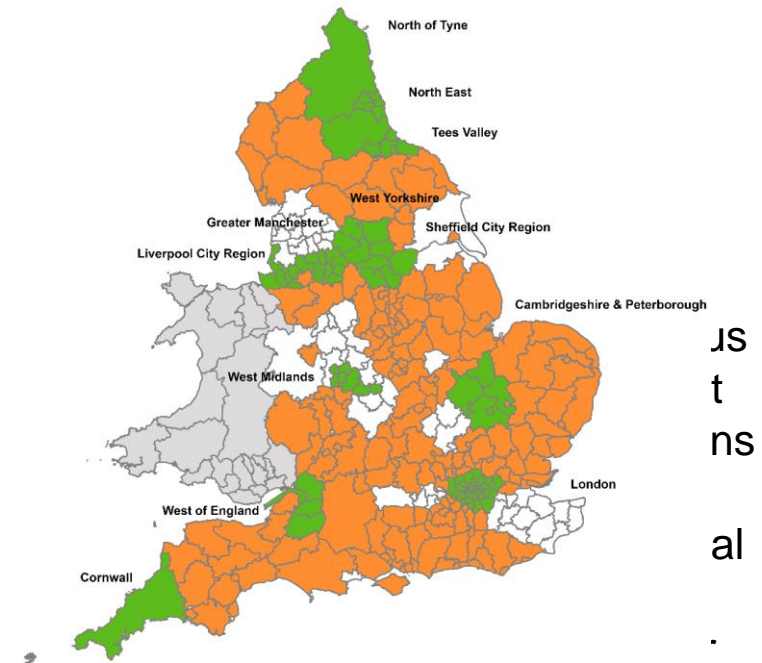


English devolution: Deal Process

34 Devolution Bids



12 Devolution Deal Areas



time more of an 'off the shelf approach'

English devolution: Powers

- Focus on economic interventions: skills, growth funding, transport, housing
- Some elements of public service reform: health, justice, police and crime
- Strong sense that willingness of different government departments to devolve crucial to shape of local deals
- Devolution deals negotiated within context of strong preference for a mayoral combined authority, division of powers at local level between Mayor and Combined Authority
- Greater London Authority has powers and functions defined in primary legislation (transport, policing, economic development, fire)
- Mayoral combined authorities a more mixed picture of policy co-design, secondary legislation and primary legislation (e.g. Greater Manchester health)

Analysis



White Paper Headline Proposals

Twelve Missions

- Boosting productivity; Spreading Opportunities; Restoring Pride; Empowering Local Leaders

New Devolution Deals

- Cornwall; Derbyshire and Derby; Devon, Plymouth and Torbay; Hull and East Yorkshire; Leicestershire; Norfolk; Nottinghamshire and Nottingham; Suffolk
- New MCA in York and North Yorkshire; similar offer to Cumbria etc.; Expanded MCA in North East; Trailblazer Deals in WMCA & GMCA; Sweeping New Powers for GLA and MCAs

Devolution Framework

- Devolution to all areas that want it; Clarity on Governance; No reorganization requirements

New Independent Data Body

- Focused on data, transparency and evidence and a new spatial data unit
- At least 50 different metrics attached to the 12 missions

Devolution Framework

Function	Detail	L1	L2	L3
Strategic role in delivering services	Host for Government functions best delivered at a strategic level involving more than one local authority e.g. Local Nature Recovery Strategies	✓	✓	✓
	Opportunity to pool services at a strategic level	✓	✓	✓
	Opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's Net Zero targets	✓	✓	✓
Supporting local businesses	LEP functions including hosting strategic business voice		✓	✓
Local control of sustainable transport	Control of appropriate local transport functions e.g. local transport plans*		✓	✓
	Defined key route network*			✓
	Priority for new rail partnerships with Great British Railways – influencing local rail offer, e.g. services and stations			✓
	Ability to introduce bus franchising		✓	✓
	Consolidation of existing core local transport funding for local road maintenance and smaller upgrades into a multi-year integrated settlement			✓

Level 3 – A single institution or County Council with a **directly elected mayor** (DEM), across a functional economic area (FEA) or whole county area

Level 2 – A **single institution or County Council without a DEM**, across a FEA or whole county area

Level 1 – Local authorities working together across a FEA or whole county area e.g. through a **joint committee**

Also important...

New National Advisory Committee

Some (new) money

- £2.6bn UK Shared Prosperity Fund; £100m Innovation Accelerators; 100 per cent of Arts Council England Funding Uplift spent outside London; £230m for Grassroots Football; £9m for parks; Commitment to streamline funding

Regional Directors of Levelling Up

Forthcoming Legislation

- Obligation for the UK Government to publish an annual report on delivery and to support the establishment of combined authorities made up of upper-tier local authorities

Strong focus on social infrastructure

- New Strategy for Community Spaces and Relationships; Review of neighborhood governance; new models for community partnership

What's Missing?



MONEY



**DETAIL ON
DELIVERY**



CERTAINTY

Reflections



LGA Priorities

- Expanding the devolution framework: drawing down powers to deliver
- Sharing the learning between areas: devolution support networks
- Broadening the conversation: levelling up locally inquiry
- Getting a grip on the data and money: defragmenting funding, harnessing information

Where do we go from here?

- Hierarchy and the complexities of English local government
- Dialogue and the need to invest in the creation of a genuinely shared local vision
- Transnational challenges and building community resilience
- Covid, crises and the limits of control

Thank you

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growth and devolution visit:
<https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/devolution>

Devolution

Our hub contains everything you need to know about devolution for local government - what has been secured, what is happening across the country and what you can do at your council.

