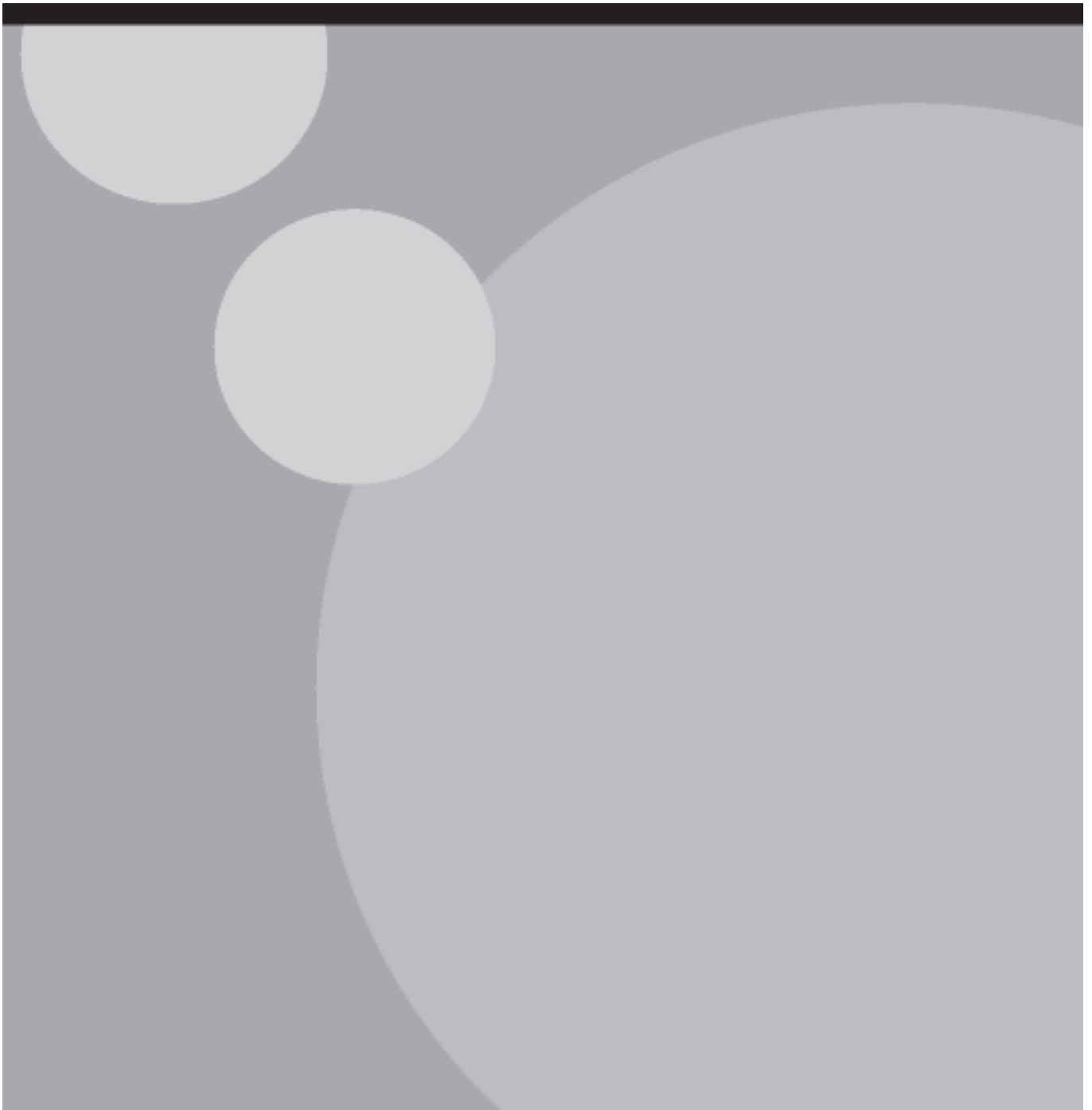




What can a mayor do for your city?

Government Response to the mayoral consultation



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WHAT CAN A MAYOR DO FOR YOUR CITY A GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Introduction

1. On 1 November the Government launched a consultation seeking views from 12 major English cities on its proposed approach for giving powers to any mayors elected in those cities. The consultation closed on 3 January 2012 and this paper provides a summary of the responses received and sets out the Government's response to the issues raised.

The consultation and its context

2. The Coalition Government is committed to creating directly elected mayors in the 12 largest English cities¹, subject to confirmatory referendums. Leicester already has a mayor, elected in May 2011. We are planning referendums in May 2012 in the other 11 cities - Birmingham, Bradford, Bristol, Coventry, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham, Sheffield and Wakefield. Where the referendum vote is in favour of having a mayor, the city will then rapidly hold an election for its first mayor.
3. The consultation paper set out our proposed approach for giving powers to any mayors elected in the 12 cities. Whilst we are clear about the potential of mayors to drive a city's economic growth and prosperity we believe that each of the cities should consider the specific powers that should be exercised by individual city mayors. We are thus proposing to look to the cities themselves to come forward with their own proposals. Where a mayor is, or in the case of Leicester has been, elected we expect that mayor to put to us any proposals he or she has for decentralising services and powers to that city mayor.
4. Views on this proposed approach were invited from those who live and work in each of the 12 cities; the city council, the business community, including the Local Enterprise Partnership, the voluntary and community sector, and public sector bodies. In addition, we invited any initial views about what powers respondents might wish to see transferred to a mayor where one is elected in any of the 12 cities. With the greater responsibility mayors will have must come increased local accountability; we therefore also invited views on how mayors can best be subject to effective local scrutiny.
5. On 8 December 2012 the Government published its prospectus for city deals, "Unlocking Growth in Cities". On the basis of this prospectus we are having discussions initially with the eight core cities² and their Local

¹ The listed cities are the largest local authorities in England, with city status, by population size, save for one exception. Sunderland although having a larger population than Newcastle-upon-Tyne is not included in the list as it held a referendum in October 2001 at which local people voted against the mayoral model.

² The core cities are: Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, Nottingham, Manchester and Sheffield.

Enterprise Partnerships and then with other cities. In these discussions we are asking the cities to identify key policy areas that are fundamental to supporting economic growth in their city, and seeking to negotiate with each city area a tailored “city deal”.

6. Each deal will involve devolving significant new powers and funding to the city in return for commitments the city itself will be offering. At the heart of the city deal is the notion of a mutually beneficial transaction, negotiated on the basis of asks and offers from both parties. An ask of Government, is that “where cities want to take on significant new powers and funding streams, they will need to demonstrate strong, accountable leadership, an ambitious agenda for the economic future of their area, effective decision-making structures, and private sector involvement and leadership (cities with a directly elected mayor will meet this requirement)”³.
7. We are therefore in the context of the city deals already following the bespoke approach to decentralisation that we are proposing to adopt when decentralising powers to mayors in the 12 cities.

Summary of responses

8. The Government has received 58 responses to the consultation “What can a mayor do for your city”, as shown in the following table. Below we also summarise the responses to each of the three questions posed in the consultation document. A full list of respondents is included at Annex A.

Type of respondent	Number of replies
Local Authorities	5
Parish Councils	6
Local authority political groups, MPs and Councillors	6 (including Councillors)
Public Sector & representative groups	12
Members of the public	19
Businesses & representative groups	8
Voluntary and Community Sector	1
Other	1
Total	58

Question 1: views on our proposed approach for giving powers to any mayors elected in the 12 cities

9. There was wide support in favour of devolving powers to councils, recognising their particular circumstances. Some respondents saw such bespoke decentralisation in the context where councils themselves could put forward their own proposals for local public functions to be transferred to them. A number of respondents argued that such devolution of powers

³ HM Government (2011), Unlocking Growth in Cities , page 10

should be available irrespective of whether there was an elected mayor. Others suggested that there should be a devolution of powers enabling a mayor to have similar powers to those currently available to the Mayor of London.

“It is entirely correct that the 12 core cities should be in a position to decide on the powers that mayors of their areas should have”. **(Centre for Public Scrutiny)**

“The bottom up approach proposed is welcome...” **(Birmingham City Council)**

“...continues to support the principle that power should be decentralised to the lowest appropriate level and that public services should be democratically accountable. We welcome the provisions in the Localism Act, which allow councils to put forward proposals to secure a transfer of local public functions by the Secretary of State”. **(Local Government Association)**

Question 2: initial ideas about what powers you might wish to see transferred to a mayor where one is elected in any of the 12 cities

10. Respondents put forward a wide range of ideas about powers that might appropriately be devolved. There was particular focus on planning, transport, employment, economic growth, health and policing, including such ideas as:

- planning – the mayor should be able to take decisions on strategically significant planning applications (similar to the London Mayor),
- transport – the mayor should be able to chair the Integrated Transport Authority, 10 year regional funding allocation,
- employment - localised pilot for work programme/commissioning welfare services – design access arrangements
- economic development - co-chair the Local Enterprise Partnership, discretion/control over tax increment finance schemes/responsibility for developing a business plan to take forward Tax increment Finance initiatives/disposal of Homes and Community Agency and ex-Regional Development Agency assets
- health – appoint a nominee to the health and wellbeing board, empowered to insist on joint approaches locally to public health challenges
- policing - hold Police and Crime Commissioner to account for police performance in city and have regard to city specific priorities as identified by the mayor.

“In our view there are number of key areas where a city mayor could assume powers
Control over local transport matters...
Ability to take strategic economic decision in conjunction with the Local Enterprise Partnership...
Control of local finance...”

Power to plan strategically...
Control over skills policies tailored to the area's unique characteristics..."
(Business West)

"As a matter of urgency a number of additional powers are necessary at a local level to drive economic development and tackle the crises in youth unemployment provide incentives and opportunities around worklessness at a local level provide a sustainable transport infrastructure to support the City Region." **(Leeds City Council)**

"The elected mayors role as the political and executive leader of Newcastle upon Tyne must be to promote transport, economic development and wealth creation , social development, culture, tourism and the improvement of the environment" **(Newcastle 'Yes' Campaign)**

Question 3: views on how mayors can best be subject to effective local scrutiny

11. Some respondents commented that effective local scrutiny was an important balance for the strong powers that an elected mayor would have. There were few specific comments about the form effective scrutiny might take. However, the Centre for Public Scrutiny commented that "While we do not suggest that Government prescribes on the detail of officer arrangements, we do suggest that, where proposals on powers for Mayors are made by authorities, these will need to be backed up by a clear commitment to accountability – of which the commitment to dedicated officer support and a clearly independent management structure could be considered as evidence".

"If Mayors are to have strong executive powers, then they should be subject to strong and effective local accountability, led by non-executive councillors".
(Centre for Public Scrutiny)

The Government's response

12. The Government has carefully considered the responses it has received. The range of comments reinforces the view the Government has taken to date that a bespoke approach to the decentralisation of powers to a local level is the right way forward. Accordingly, the Government confirms that where any mayors are elected in the 12 cities it will continue the bespoke approach to devolving powers that it is already pursuing in the context of city deals, but with the mayors themselves having an important role in the process of decentralising powers. At this stage, other than as part of a city deal negotiation the Government does not intend to reach any view about specific powers that might be devolved, or about a council's scrutiny and accountability arrangements.

Index of responses to Consultation

1. Addleshaw Goddard LLP
2. Argent Estates Limited
3. Association of Colleges
4. Association of Greater Manchester Authorities
5. Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
6. Birmingham City Council
7. Birmingham City Council - Labour Group
8. Birmingham Forward
9. Boston Spa Parish Council - Councillor
10. Bristol City Council - Conservative Group
11. Bristol City Council - Leader
12. Business West
13. Centre for Cities
14. Centre for Public Scrutiny
15. CENTRO
16. Coventry City Council
17. Dinnington Parish Council
18. Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
19. Greater Manchester Combined Authority
20. Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership
21. Haworth, Cross Roads & Stanbury Parish Council
22. Keighly Town Council
23. Leeds City Council
24. Leeds City Council - Councillor
25. Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce
26. Liverpool Chamber of Commerce
27. Local Government Association
28. Manchester City Council
29. Micklefield Parish Council
30. Newcastle City Council – Liberal Democrat Group
31. Newcastle upon Tyne Vote Yes Group
32. Normantown Parish Council
33. Nottingham City Council
34. Passenger Transport Executive Group
35. Royal Town Planning Institute
36. Gisela Stuart - MP
37. South East England Councils
38. TravelWatch NorthWest
39. Voscur

And **19** members of the public writing in an individual capacity