



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

# The Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle Upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland Combined Authority

Summary of responses to consultation on proposal to establish the Combined Authority

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# Section 1

## Introduction

1. The Secretary of State has laid before Parliament a draft Order, which if approved by Parliament and subsequently made, will establish the Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle Upon Tyne, South Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland Combined Authority. The Order will also abolish the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority. This Order is to be made under the Local Transport Act 2008 and the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act).
2. Under the 2009 Act it is for the councils concerned to initiate the process for establishing a combined authority, by undertaking a governance review and publishing a scheme for such an authority, which will, across the area concerned exercise transport, economic development and regeneration functions. The councils concerned have done this and come forward with a scheme to establish a combined authority.
3. Thereafter, as required by the 2009 Act, the Secretary of State has consulted all authorities that are within the proposed area of the Combined Authority, and other persons considered appropriate, on the proposal to make an Order to establish the Combined Authority. This paper summarises the responses received to the consultation on the proposal to establish the Combined Authority.
4. As the 2009 Act also requires, the Secretary of State:
  - considers that establishing the combined authority is likely to improve the following (the “four statutory tests”):
    - the exercise of statutory functions relating to transport in the area,
    - the effectiveness and efficiency of transport in the area,
    - the exercise of statutory functions relating to economic development and regeneration in the area, and
    - economic conditions in the area; and
  - has had regard to the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and to secure effective and convenient local government.
5. In reaching his conclusion to lay this draft Order the Secretary of State has adopted the policy that whilst considering the circumstances of each case, where councils come forward with proposals for a combined authority which command wide local support and meet the statutory conditions, he will invite Parliament to approve the Order establishing that combined authority. He also had regard to the fact that the case for the Combined Authority is reinforced by the commitments in the City Deals for the area concerned, which Government has agreed, and in another that is being negotiated.

# Section 2

## The consultation

6. The consultation sought views on the proposal to establish the Combined Authority and in particular:
  - on whether it was considered that establishing the proposed combined authority would be likely to improve the provision of transport in the area and its effectiveness and efficiency, the provision of economic development and regeneration in the area, and the economic conditions in the area;
  - on how establishing such an authority may impact on the identities and interests of local communities and on securing effective and convenient local government;
  - on the proposed constitutional arrangements (including the formal name of the Combined Authority) and functions for a combined authority, and
  - on how such an authority and the local enterprise partnership can work in a seamless manner to ensure the private sector is 'hardwired' into the leadership and decision making for the functional economic area.
7. The consultation ran for eight weeks and the consultation document<sup>1</sup> was available on the GOV.UK website and responses could be returned to the Department for Communities and Local Government by email or by post. Local authorities consulted were invited to draw the consultation to the attention of members of the public, local businesses and their representative bodies and the voluntary sector. In particular, given the circumstances of the area, the consultation asked the councils concerned to actively seek through such means as they consider appropriate the views of their residents, local businesses, and the voluntary sector with a view to providing the necessary evidence for Government to be satisfied about the degree of local support there is for a combined authority.

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<sup>1</sup> The consultation was entitled "Proposal to establish a combined authority for Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear."

# Section 3

## Summary of responses

### Overview

8. The consultation ran from 7 November 2013 to 2 January 2014 and the Government received 73 representations. Of these there were:
  - 28 from local residents;
  - 21 from local organisations delivering public services and their representative bodies (including ten from local government);
  - 11 from local businesses and their representative bodies;
  - nine from elected representatives;
  - two from the voluntary and community sector;
  - one from a community newspaper; and
  - one from a Trade Union.
9. An additional six responses received did not respond directly to any of the consultation questions and contained no relevant material.
10. Of the 73 representations, 47 (64 per cent) supported the proposal to establish the Combined Authority, 22 (30 per cent) opposed the proposal, and four (six per cent) made comments on the proposed constitutional arrangements or functions of the proposed Combined Authority, but did not express a view on whether they supported the proposals.

### **Statutory consultees and other organisations invited to respond by the Secretary of State**

11. Five of the statutory consultees (Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council) provided a joint response. South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council responded separately.
12. The five councils' joint response and that from the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority:
  - confirmed the view that the Combined Authority would improve transport, economic development and regeneration and deliver growth;
  - confirmed support for the establishment of the Combined Authority;

- provided evidence that the Combined Authority would not adversely affect the identity and interests of local communities and that it would provide effective and convenient local government;
  - set out in further detail how the Combined Authority and North East Local Enterprise Partnership would work together; and
  - broadly supported the proposed constitutional arrangements and sought some amendments, including that the name be changed to the “North East Leadership Board”, or that it includes the name of each constituent local authority.
13. The authorities in the Teeside Local Enterprise Partnership area (the borough councils of Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees) asked the Government not to use “North East” in the authority’s legal name, due to fear of confusion locally.
  14. South Tyneside Council (a statutory consultee) confirmed their strong support for the creation of the Combined Authority. They considered that the proposition for the Combined Authority should be more far-reaching so as to “accelerate economic growth and lasting change”. They broadly supported the proposed constitutional arrangements and sought similar amendments to those proposed in the joint response.
  15. Sunderland City Council (a statutory consultee) initially responded to the consultation supporting the principle of the Combined Authority but requesting a delay to its establishment until it had worked through some practical details of the operation of the Combined Authority with the other constituent councils. Subsequent to the consultation, the Leader of Sunderland City Council responded to the Department stating that “all the outstanding issues have now been resolved to the degree that I am now comfortable to sign up to the creation of the Combined Authority”.
  16. The North East Local Enterprise Partnership supported the proposals, citing the potential to maximise economic growth through coordinated governance arrangements.

## **Other responses**

17. Responses were received from others, including local businesses and their representative organisations, parish and town Councils, Councillors, an MP, transport providers, local service providers (including education, health, fire and rescue and archives), a community newspaper, UNISON, the voluntary and community sector and members of the public. The responses in favour of the proposed Combined Authority cited the potential to maximise economic growth and improve transport provision through coordinated governance arrangements. Concerns were voiced about an additional layer of government with an increase in bureaucracy, effective scrutiny, and the impact on rural areas.

## Local support

18. The councils provided a local consultation report summarising the results of their local consultation. In total, over 650 interested parties – including around 450 residents – participated in the local consultation exercise. An online survey received 444 responses, with 324 (75 per cent) from residents. 75 per cent of respondents to the online survey were supportive of the proposal to establish the Combined Authority for the area. A similar proportion considered that a more co-ordinated approach would help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of transport and provision of economic development and regeneration within the seven local authority areas.
19. In addition to the survey local consultation took the form of 16 focus groups, a range of meetings with interested parties, direct correspondence and articles in the local press. The local authorities report that the vast majority of responses were positive. They centred on efficiency of service delivery, the value of coordination across a larger area and the need for a single voice. Concerns raised focused on fears of increased bureaucracy and added layers of government, and the risk that not all areas would be adequately represented.