



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# Secretary of State's Annual Report on Devolution 2023-24

**Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 1 of the Cities and  
Local Government Devolution Act 2016**



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## **Contents**

1. Introduction
2. Areas with agreements
3. Areas that have submitted proposals
4. Functions exercisable by a Minister of the Crown that have been devolved
5. Additional financial resources and public functions that have been devolved
6. Consideration of devolving powers to local government

Annex A: Underpinning Legislation

Annex B: English Devolution Accountability Framework

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Annual Report on Devolution has been laid before both Houses of Parliament by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government pursuant to Section 1 (Devolution: annual report) of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 ('the 2016 Act').
- 1.2 This Annual Report brings together updated information about devolution agreements reached or implemented between government and areas between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024.
- 1.3 These devolution agreements, in response to proposals from areas, are agreements in which the government undertakes to devolve powers and budgets to an area in return for changes in local governance and local political accountability.
- 1.4 Devolution within England aims to provide local areas with the levers they need to boost productivity in local economies and to improve and integrate public services.
- 1.5 This report covers the work of the government in 2023-24. The 2024-25 report, planned for publication later in 2025, will cover the work undertaken by the government following the July 2024 election, including significant proposed changes to the approach, framework and structure of devolution in England.

## 2. Areas with agreements

***Legislative requirement: Section 1 (2)(a) of the 2016 Act requires the Report to provide information on the areas of the country where agreements have been reached.***

- 2.1 Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, the government negotiated and announced two new mayoral devolution deals, as well as a number of non-mayoral devolution deals.
- 2.2 In the 2023 Autumn Statement, the government published devolution deals<sup>1</sup> with four new areas of England.
- 2.3 Two of these were mayoral deals, covering Hull and East Yorkshire and Greater Lincolnshire. The Hull and East Yorkshire deal was for a Mayoral Combined Authority, agreed with Kingston Upon Hull City Council and East Riding of Yorkshire Council. The Greater Lincolnshire deal was for a Mayoral Combined County Authority, agreed with Lincolnshire County Council, North East Lincolnshire, and North Lincolnshire Council.
- 2.4 Both the Hull and East Yorkshire and Greater Lincolnshire deals mean that the mayor and local leaders will have more control and influence over the levers of local growth, including the Adult Education Budget, transport, and planning, alongside £20 million of capital funding each to invest in local priorities. Both will also receive a long-term mayoral Investment Fund to drive economic growth and take forward local priorities.
- 2.5 The 2023 Autumn Statement also announced non-mayoral devolution deals for Lancashire and Cornwall. The Cornwall deal replaced a previous deal that was negotiated in 2022.
- 2.6 The Lancashire deal was an agreement to establish a non-mayoral combined county authority, made with Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council, to give local leaders more control and influence over the levers of local growth, including the Adult Education Budget and transport, alongside £20 million of capital funding to invest in local priorities. The deal with Cornwall Council was a ‘Single Local Authority’ deal, meaning it would receive devolved powers by itself as a unitary authority.
- 2.7 In January 2024, the government also announced a deal to establish a Devon and Torbay non-Mayoral Combined County Authority (CCA), agreed with Devon County Council and Torbay Council. This deal means that local leaders gain more control and influence over the levers of local growth, including the Adult Education Budget and transport, alongside £16 million of capital funding to invest in local priorities.
- 2.8 In March 2024, three deals were announced with Warwickshire County Council, Surrey County Council and Buckinghamshire Council. These were ‘Single Local Authority’ deals.
- 2.9 Following the July 2024 general election, in September 2024 the government recommitted to the deals agreed covering: Hull and East Yorkshire, Greater Lincolnshire, Lancashire, Devon and Torbay, Cornwall, Warwickshire, Surrey and Buckinghamshire. The combined county authorities for Greater Lincolnshire, Lancashire and Devon and Torbay, and the combined authority for Hull and East Yorkshire, were established on 5 February 2025. More detail of these renewed deals and their implementation will be set out in the next iteration of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> [York and North Yorkshire devolution deal](#) – August 2022

### 3. Areas that have submitted proposals

***Legislative requirement: Section 1 (2)(b) of the 2016 Act requires the Report to provide information on the areas of the country where proposals have been received by the Secretary of State and negotiations have taken place but agreement has not yet been reached.***

- 3.1 Between 2023-2024, the government entered into devolution discussions with seven upper-tier local authority areas, including: Warwickshire, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Somerset. Three of these areas – Warwickshire, Surrey, Buckinghamshire – met the criteria for an agreement at the time so were taken forward and announced as part of the 2024 Spring Budget.
- 3.2 Also in this period, the government discussed with the upper-tier local authorities of Essex, Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea about establishing a combined county authority across this geography, although agreements were not reached in 2023-24. Discussions were also held with the councils of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland; Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness; and Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington.
- 3.3 There were also devolution discussions with the unitary authority of Plymouth City Council regarding the deal to establish a Devon and Torbay non-Mayoral Combined County Authority (CCA). As set out above, a Combined County Authority covering Devon and Torbay only was agreed in January 2024, following Plymouth City Council's withdrawal from the deal.

### 4. Functions exercisable by a Minister of the Crown that have been devolved.

***Legislative requirement: Section 1 (2)(c) of the 2016 Act requires the Report to provide information on functions exercisable by a Minister of the Crown that have been devolved as a result of agreements so as to become exercisable by a mayor for the area of a combined authority (including information as to any such functions that remain exercisable by a Minister of the Crown as a result of an agreement providing for functions to be exercisable jointly or concurrently).***

- 4.1 Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, three statutory instruments (SIs) were made to implement devolution deals between the government and areas in England. These SIs established and conferred functions on the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA), the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), and the North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA).
- 4.2 These SIs were made on 19 December 2023, 27 February 2024 and 20 March 2024 respectively:
- The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023 (SI 2023/1432)<sup>2</sup>
  - The East Midlands Combined County Authority Regulations 2024 (SI 2024/232)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [The York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority Order 2023](#)

<sup>3</sup> [The East Midlands Combined County Authority Regulations 2024](#)

- The North East Mayoral Combined Authority (Establishment and Functions) Order 2024 (SI 2024/402)<sup>4</sup>

4.3 These SIs conferred on all three authorities;

- a. a jointly exercisable function with a Minister of the Crown, to pay a grant to a constituent authority without consent from the Treasury
- b. the ability to pay grants to bus service operators.

4.4 The North East Mayoral Combined Authority SI also provides for the conferral of certain adult education functions of the Secretary of State under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 to NEMCA.

4.5 The Levelling-up & Regeneration Act 2023<sup>5</sup> received royal assent on 26 October 2023. This legislation enabled the creation of the Combined County Authorities (CCA), enabling areas of the country with 'two-tier' governance arrangements to more easily benefit from devolution. It simplified the process of establishing and amending existing combined authorities and enabled local authorities to change to a directly elected mayor model more easily. It also included changes to support combined authorities' Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

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<sup>4</sup> [The North East Mayoral Combined Authority \(Establishment and Functions\) Order 2024](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023](#)

## 5. Additional financial resources and public functions that have been devolved

**Legislative requirement: Section 1 (2)(d) of the Act requires the Report to provide information on additional financial resources and public functions (so far as not falling within paragraph (c)) which have been devolved as a result of agreements.**

To note – due to rounding the individual figures listed in the tables below may not sum to the total amounts listed

### 5.1 Financial resources devolved to devolution deal areas between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

Funding Stream	Description	Accountable Government Department	Place(s) affected and amounts received in 2023-24	Total amount paid in 2023-24	Payment Schedule	Comment
Investment Funds	Capital and revenue funding agreed through devolution deals for local investment.	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA): £20m East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA): £18m Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA): £30m Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA): £30m North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA): £20m South Yorkshire Combined Authority (SYCA): £30m Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA): £15m West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA): £36.5m West of England Combined Authority (WECA): £30m West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA): £38m York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA): £9m	£276.5m	30-year commitment for each area, commences from the signing of each individual agreement.	Payments made by Section 31 grant.
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)	Devolved in line with policy	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	CPCA: £2,396,268 Greater London Authority (GLA): £35,059,459 GMCA: £20,352,086	£140,258,122	£577,863,462 across the Spending Review period. £70m in 22-23, 140m in 23-24 and	



			LCRCA: £10,771,919 NTCA: £11,428,413 SYCA: £9,443,235 TVCA: £10,370,310 WMCA: £21,458,339 WECA: £2,472,540 WYCA: £16,505,553		367m in 24-25.	
Green Economic Growth Funding	£7m total - to drive green economic growth towards YNY's ambitions to be a carbon negative region	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	YNYCA: £1,204,799 Capital, £548,748 Resource	£1,753,547	Paid in two instalments - second payment scheduled for 24/25	Payments made by Section 31 grant.
Flexible Pot Add-on	Upfront capital for economic regeneration projects	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	NTCA: £10m Capital	£10m	One-off payment	Payments made by Section 31 grant.
Capital Add-on grant	Upfront capital for economic regeneration projects	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	EMCCA: £11.7m	£11.7m	One-off payment	Payments made by Section 31 grant.
City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements	A 5-year, £5.7bn funding programme supporting investment in improved local transport networks.	Department for Transport	GMCA: £179.8m LCRCA: £143m SYCA: £114.8m TVCA: £62.4m WECA: £94.7m WMCA: £211.5m WYCA: £167.2m	£973.4m	Annual grant in accordance with agreed settlement profile.	Settlements incorporate funding from the Highways Maintenance Block (HMB), Potholes Fund, Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and the Transforming Cities Fund. Figures for

					<p>Greater Manchester and West of England are slightly less than their settlement letters, reflecting their agreement to forego certain funding streams (including ITB and HMB) in return for retaining an increased proportion of business rates.</p> <p>Although the North East Combined Authority did not receive a CRSTS allocation in 23/24, Highways Maintenance and Integrated Transport Block funding for the North</p>
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						East was allocated from the region's indicative £563m CRSTS allocation, ahead of agreeing a funding settlement.
Integrated Transport Block (ITB)	The ITB provides funding support to local authorities for transport capital improvement schemes worth less than £5 million.	Department for Transport	CPCA £4,663,000	<a href="#">MCAs that receive CRSTS received equivalent levels of ITB funding totalling £89.9m in 23/24.</a>		CRSTS consolidates funds equivalent to HMB (element and incentive), potholes funding and ITB.
Highways Maintenance Block (HMB) (including Potholes Fund and NN funding)	Funding for structural maintenance of the local highway network, including roads resurfacing, footways, cycleways, bridges, drainage, gullies, culverts, retaining walls, and lighting columns. HM funding for city regions is now within CRSTS, and HM allocations go to MCAs outside of CRSTS.	Department for Transport	All eligible local highway authorities – some additional funding went to CRSTS places <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Baseline funding</a>: all eligible authorities except London and CRSTS</li> <li>- <a href="#">£200 million Budget uplift</a>: all eligible authorities except London</li> </ul> <a href="#">Network North</a> : all eligible authorities	£1,265m (equivalent levels of HM within CRSTS for the city regions)  <a href="#">MCAs that receive CRSTS received equivalent levels of HMB incentive element, HMB needs</a>	Quarterly (with some exceptions due to deals or otherwise, such as BRR pilot)	As of 2025/26, there is no NN funding or Potholes Fund. All goes through HMB

				element and potholes funding which totalled £208.5m in 23/24		
Transforming Cities Fund	A £2.45bn funding programme supporting investment in public and sustainable transport infrastructure.	Department for Transport	CPCA: £13,329,000 WYCA: £6,265,317	£19,594,317	Annual grant in accordance with agreed profile.	The total amount paid out from TCF in 2023/24 was £150,223,468 but this included other local authorities as well as combined authorities (total for CAs was £19.6m)
Local Authority Bus Service Operators Grant	Discretionary funding to local authorities in England to support bus services and the bus network in their area.	Department for Transport	CPCA: £409,030 Transport for Greater Manchester (GMCA): £2,953,691 SYCA: £1,127,171 WMCA, £1,792,259 WECA: £1,147,621 West Yorkshire Metro (WYCA): £2,063,592 North Yorkshire County Council (YNYCA): £1,039,698	£10,533,062	Annual payment	

Bus Service Operators Grant Plus	Discretionary revenue support funding to local bus operators in England. Administration of operator funding in Greater Manchester and West Midland Combined Authorities is devolved.	Department for Transport	WMCA, £11,000,000 GMCA, £6,500,000	17,500,000	One-off grant (BSOG Plus is due to end in March 2026)	
Devolved Commercial Bus Service Operators Grant	Discretionary revenue support funding to local bus operators in England. Devolved funding of commercial BSOG for GMCA to support its own bus services. DfT does not pay BSOG to operators for services run within GMCA's borders.	Department for Transport	GMCA, £13,150,811	£13,150,811	Annual grant	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	Funding to deliver long- term improvements to bus services as set out in local transport authorities' Bus Service Improvement Plans.	Department for Transport	CPCA: £2,314,172 GMCA: £32,760,000 LCRCA: £7,784,027 SYCA: £3,151,353 TVCA: £1,529,477 WMCA: £36,686,987 WECA: £50,263,134 WYCA: £31,804,849	£166,293,999	One-off Grant	

Work & Health Programme	Funding for locally commissioned programmes aimed at long term jobseekers and claimants with disabilities	Department for Work & Pensions	GMCA: £6.5m	£6.5m	Maximum indicative amount over 8 years £43.1m <sup>6</sup> . Increased from £30m to £43.1m for WHP extension	Payments are made by Section 31 grant. Funding determined by DWP on receipt of the contractual performance profiles and unit prices agreed between Greater Manchester and their suppliers.
Pioneer	Funding for locally commissioned programmes aimed at long term jobseekers and claimants with disabilities	Department for Work and Pensions	GMCA: £560k	£560k	Maximum indicative amount over 3 years £3.3m <sup>7</sup> .	Payments are made by Section 31 grant. Funding determined by DWP on receipt of the contractual performance profiles and unit prices agreed between Greater Manchester and their suppliers.
Growth Hubs	Core funding for the provision of local Growth Hub services. Growth	Department for Business and Trade	CPCA: £298,250 GLA: £470,000 GMCA: £420,000 LCRCA :£420,000		Annual	

<sup>6</sup> Subject to spending review

<sup>7</sup> Subject to spending review

	Hub funding has not been devolved but is given to MCAs as accountable bodies for their Growth Hub. For 25/26 GH funding is being included in GM and W.Mids integrated settlements so would expect that to fall under this category in future years		SYCA(then Sheffield City Region): £380,000 TVCA: £261,000 WMCA: £420,000 WECA: £380,000 WYCA (then Leeds City Region): £420,000			
Made Smarter	Made Smarter programme funding, provided to a lead authority to deliver the programme across a wider regional geography. Funding is provided by S31 grants. Funding has been included in the integrated settlements for GM and WM for 25/26.	Department for Business and Trade	GMCA: £1.8m NTCA: £0.8m SYCA: £1.6m WMCA: £2.3m East Midlands - Lincolnshire County Council: £1.2m		Annual	
Adult Skills Fund	Devolved budget which funds qualifications and programmes for learners aged 19+.	Department for Education	CPCA: £12m GMCA: £97m LCRCA: £54m NTCA: £24m SYCA: £40m TVCA: £31m WMCA: £133m WECA: £15m WYCA: £67m	£473m	Is Annual payment Payments made by Section 31 grant.	
Free Courses for Jobs	Ring-fenced funding in the financial year 2023-24 for the delivery of the Free Courses for Jobs Level 3 offer in devolved areas.	Department for Education	CPCA: £0.6m GMCA: £1.7m LCRCA: £1.7m NTCA: £0.8m SYCA: £0.5m TVCA: £1.0m WMCA: £3.6m WYCA: £0.8m WECA: £0.4m	£11.0m	Is Annual payment Payments made by Section 31 grant.	FCFJ underspends from the previous academic year are taken off the FY payment . As such, the payment

						s referenc ed will represen t a deductio n for undersp ends in the 2021/22 academi c year
Policing Grants	Provided where Mayor has Police and Crime Commissioner powers as part of a devolution agreement	Home Office	GMCA: £525m WYCA: £384m	£906m	12 monthly instalments	Payment s made under Section 46 of the Police Act 1996
Fire Grants	Pension Grant	Home Office	GMCA: £5,605,012		1 annual payment	
Fire Grant	Protection Grant	Home Office	GMCA: £231,024		2 payments (6 monthly)	
Fire Grant	Fire National Resilience (new dimension)	Home Office	GMCA: £106,938	£294k	4 quarterly instalments	
Fire Grant	Fire Link	Home Office	GMCA: £140,640		4 quarterly instalments	

5.2 This section provides information on significant financial resources that are delivered by combined authorities but have not been devolved as a result of their devolution deals.

Funding Stream	Description	Accountable Government Department	Place(s) affected and amounts received in 2023-24	Total amount paid in 2023-24	Payment Schedule	Comment
Commonwealth Legacy Funding		Department for Culture, Media and Sport	WMCA: £15.9m	£15.9m	£69.3m across 23/24 and 24/25, 15.9m drawn down in 23/24	
Brownfield Housing Fund	The Brownfield Housing Fund aims to create more homes by bringing more brownfield land into development. The Fund is allocated to mayoral combined	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	GMCA: £17.5m LCRCA: £14.9m NECA: £14.9m SYCA: £6.7m TVCA: £5m WMCA: £10m WYCA: £25m	£94m	£597m capital funding over 6 years from 2020/21 to 2025/26	Payments made by Section 31 grant.



	authorities (MCAs).					
Active Travel Fund 4 Extension (ATF 4E)	Funding supports local transport authorities with developing and constructing walking and cycling facilities.	Department for Transport/Active Travel England	CPCA: £1,100,000 GMCA: £3,826,673 NECA: £5,095,298 SYCA £3,358,273 TVCA £1,301,398 WMCA £6,141,969 WECA £169,174 WYCA £3,082,319	£45,794,803	One-off payments made in Mar 24	

### 5.3 Capacity funding paid to devolution deal areas between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

Funding Stream	Description	Accountable Government Department	Place(s) affected and amounts received in 2023-24	Total amount paid in 2023-24	Payment Schedule	Comment
Mayoral Capacity Fund	Helps to establish new and maintain existing institutions by boosting their capacity and resource to deliver for their local area.	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	CPCA: £1m EMCCA: £0.5m GMCA: £1m LCRCA: £1m NTCA: £1m SYCA: £1m TVCA: £1m WMCA: £1m WECA: £1m WYCA: £1m YNYCA: £0.5m	£10m	Payment currently confirmed up to 25-26	Payments made by Section 31 grant.
LUF Grant Recipient capacity funding	This funding was made available as part of a £65m package to support the delivery of Levelling Up Fund projects. Direct grant funding was provided to Levelling Up Fund grant recipients, to support their capacity and capability to deliver their funded LUF projects.	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	CPCA: £86k GLA: £76k LCRCA £86k NECA £86k TVCA: £86k WYCA: £86k Cornwall: (£76k Lancashire County Council: (£76k)	£658k	This is a yearly payment, dependant on which Levelling Up Fund round authorities had a successful bid in.  Liverpool City Region, due to being the only listed authority with a successful LUF round 1 bid, received £125k in 22/23 FY.  All the listed authorities received payments for	

					<p>24/25 FY, listed below –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough (£60k);</li> <li>• Greater London Authority (£50k);</li> <li>• Liverpool City Region (£60k);</li> <li>• North East Combined Authority (£60k);</li> <li>• Tees Valley (£60k);</li> <li>• West Yorkshire (£60k);</li> <li>• Cornwall (£50k);</li> <li>• Lancashire County Council (£50k)</li> </ul> <p>Additional payment due for 25/26 FY – like to be around £32k per authority.</p>	
LUF MCA capacity support	This funding was made available as part of a £65m package to support the delivery of Levelling Up Fund projects. The grant support to MCAs/GLA was aimed at providing funding for the authorities to build the necessary capacity and capability support infrastructure to support LAs within the MCAs geographical area to deliver their capital projects as part of a	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	<p>£300k per authority –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPCA</li> <li>• GLA</li> <li>• GMCA</li> <li>• LCRCA</li> <li>• NTCA</li> <li>• SYCA</li> <li>• TVCA</li> <li>• WMCA</li> <li>• WECA</li> <li>• WYCA</li> </ul>	£3 million	<p>Payments were made in the 22/23 and 23/24 FYs. No further payments are due to be made. Total paid was £9.25 million.</p>	

	devolved, sector-led approach. We expected support to be offered broadly to LA capital projects that the MCA would not routinely be involved in.					
Brownfield Housing Fund (Capacity Funding)	The Brownfield Housing Fund aims to create more homes by bringing more brownfield land into development. The Fund is allocated to mayoral combined authorities (MCAs).	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities	EMCCA: £459,000 NECA: £237,500 YNYCA: £173,500	£870,000	£10.4m capacity funding over 6 years from 2020/21 to 2025/26	Payments made by Section 31 grant.
Active Travel Capability Fund	Funding for 1) developing infrastructure plans and designs, public consultation and evidence collection 2) carrying out community engagement activities, such as schools programmes, training and promotion	Department for Transport/Active Travel England	CPCA: £961,200, £411,460 GMCA: £3,074,519, £1,697,656 LCRCA: £1,108,823, £695,767 NECA: £1,406,713, £706,754 SYCA: £981,957, £493,293 TVCA: £484,606, £242,900 WMCA: £3,125,695, £1,728,260 WECA: £681,902, £343,045 WYCA: £2,518,865, £1,265,484	£35,018,783 (spring 24) £16,465,002 (autumn 23)	Two payments in autumn 23 and spring 24	

5.4 Financial resources paid to devolution deal areas for pilot agreements between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

Funding Stream	Description	Accountable Government Department	Place(s) affected and amounts received in 2023-24	Total amount paid in 2023-24	Payment Schedule	Comment
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<p>Housing First Pilots</p>	<p>The fund was not devolved, the pilots were funded to 3 combined authority areas* through the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping directorate to test the Housing First model in England, in line with other grant funding provided to local authorities, combined authorities and unitary authorities during this timeframe.</p>	<p>Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities</p>	<p>GMCA: £3,288,770  LCRCA: £2,837,052  WMCA: £1,741,776</p>	<p>£7,867,599</p>	<p>The pilots ran from 2018 and ended in March 2024. For 23/24 The payment schedule was:</p> <p>Tranche 1 - £4,073,010 (April)</p> <p>Tranche 2 – £3,794,589 (November)</p> <p>The areas continued to receive funding via the Rough Sleeping Initiative grant in 2024/25, via 2 tranche payments, in order to continue delivery of the schemes in the three local areas.</p>	<p>From 25/26 onwards, local authorities will be directly awarded funding to reduce rough sleeping, but they will have the choice of how this can most effectively be delivered in their local area. The could, but does not have to, include continuation of funding for the Housing First schemes.</p>
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## 6. Consideration of devolving powers to local government

***Legislative requirement: Section 1 (2)(e) of the Act requires the Report to provide information on the extent to which consideration has been given by a Minister of the Crown to the principle that powers should be devolved to combined authorities or the most appropriate local level except where those powers can more effectively be exercised by central government.***

6.1 In 2021, the government set out an intention to extend, deepen and simplify devolution across England.<sup>8</sup>

6.2 Over the reporting period, the government undertook discussions and signed an agreement with the North East Mayoral Combined Authority to include it in the ‘trailblazer’ deals already agreed with Greater Manchester and the West Midlands.

6.3 A key aspect of these deals was the agreement of a single funding settlement. On 22 November 2023, the previous government published a memorandum of understanding for the Single Settlements for Greater Manchester and West Midlands Combined Authorities. The North East ‘trailblazer’ deal included a commitment to receive a Single Settlement at the next Spending Review.

6.4 As part of the Levelling Up White Paper, the government presented a devolution framework that indicates of the types of powers and functions that will be considered for each devolution level, bringing together policies from across government. On 1 March, the previous government published details of an additional ‘Level 4’ in the framework and the policies that were on offer to authorities. Detail is outlined on the following page in line with the following structure:

- Level 1.** Local Authorities working together across a Functional Economic Area (FEA) or whole county area e.g. through a joint committee.
- Level 2.** A single institution or County Council working without a Directly Elected Leader (DEL)<sup>9</sup>, across a FEA.
- Level 3.** A single institution or County Council working with a DEL, across a FEA or whole county area.
- Level 4.** Deeper devolution for an established single institution or county council with a Directly Elected Leader in post who can meet specific eligibility and accountability criteria.

Future editions of this report will provide an update on changes to the devolution framework.

6.5 The devolution framework table below sets out full details of the powers and functions added for Level 4.

6.6 The English Devolution Accountability Framework<sup>10</sup> (EDAF) was first published on 16 March 2023 and delivers on the Levelling Up White Paper commitment to publish a new accountability framework to apply to all English institutions with devolved powers. It was the first step in setting out how the mayoral combined authorities and the Greater London Authority will be scrutinised and held to account by the government, local politicians and business leaders, and by the residents and voters of their area.

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<sup>8</sup> [Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper, 2022 pg. 19](#)

<sup>9</sup> On occasion, reference may instead be made to a directly elected mayor though this does not represent a change to the devolution framework.

<sup>10</sup> [English Devolution Accountability Framework](#) – Published March 2023

6.7 Following the end of the period covered by this report; the King’s Speech in July 2024 included the announcement of an English Devolution Bill, and the English Devolution White Paper was published in December 2024. This report reflects policy before these developments, and as such republishes the EDAF as it was in effect in 2023-24. The 2024-25 version of this report will republish the EDAF following a reassessment of the framework given the aforementioned policy developments.

<b>Devolution Framework</b>				
<b>Detail</b>	<b>L1</b>	<b>L2</b>	<b>L3</b>	<b>L4</b>
<b>Strategic role in delivering services</b>				
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	✓	✓	✓	✓
A strategic role on net zero in collaboration with government		✓	✓	✓
Opportunity for devolution of retrofit funding subject to the outcome of the existing pilots in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands				✓
<b>Supporting local businesses</b>				
LEP functions including hosting strategic business voice	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunity to access a Strategic Productivity Partnership to support local business growth				✓
Opportunity to articulate research and development priorities^				✓
<b>Transport</b>				
Become the strategic transport body for the area and take on all associated Local Transport Authority and public transport functions. This includes responsibility for an area-wide local transport plan, bus Enhanced Partnerships, support for public transport services, and concessionary fares*		✓	✓	✓
Defined and coordinated, Key Route Network, with a mayoral power of direction over the exercise of local highway and traffic authority powers on the Key Route Network*			✓	✓
Priority for new rail partnerships with Great British Railways – influencing local rail offer, e.g. services and stations			✓	✓
Have automatic access to franchising powers to independently introduce bus franchising in line with current guidance*			✓	✓
Consolidation of local transport funding settlement in line with the principles set out in the Levelling Up White Paper and Funding Simplification Doctrine. The quantum of funding and the number/remit of individual funding lines will be agreed through the next Spending Review Process			✓	
Single local transport funding settlement in line with the principles set out in the Levelling Up White Paper and Funding Simplification Doctrine. The quantum of funding and the number/remit of individual funding lines will be agreed through the next Spending Review Process				✓
Responsibility for administering payment of Bus Service Operators Grant			✓	✓
Leadership in improving consistency and efficiency in taxi and private hire vehicle licensing				✓

Government commitment, subject to delivery of the Pay As You Go rail ticketing pilots in Greater Manchester and West Midlands, to build on these pilots to inform and support regional ambitions for integrated multi-modal ticketing				✓
Leadership in developing a consistent approach to pavement parking in the area				✓
<b>Investment spending</b>				
UKSPF planning and delivery at a strategic level		✓	✓	✓
Long-term investment fund, with an agreed annual allocation			✓	✓
Consolidation and simplification of local growth & place and housing & regeneration funding, including a pathway to a single department-style financial settlement.				✓
Removal of gateway review, subject to meeting certain criteria				✓
<b>Giving adults the skills for the labour market</b>				
Devolution of Adult Education functions and the core Adult Education Budget		✓	✓	✓
Providing support and refinement for Local Skills Improvement Plans		✓	✓	✓
Role in designing and delivering future contracted employment programmes			✓	✓
Ringfenced funding for Free Courses for Jobs		✓	✓	✓
Ability to work with DfE to commission a local programme of Skills Bootcamps, to be informed by future spending agreements	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work with local stakeholders to align careers provision with devolved AEB activities		✓	✓	✓
Full devolution of Free Courses for Jobs funding				✓
Full flexibility over Skills Bootcamps funding				✓
Central convening of careers provision				✓
New regional Labour Market Partnership Board				✓
<b>Housing and infrastructure</b>				
Ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations (with consent of host local planning authority)			✓	✓
Devolution of locally-led brownfield funding			✓	✓
Homes England compulsory purchase powers (held concurrently)		✓	✓	✓
Strategic control in any future Affordable Homes Programme (from 2026)				✓
<b>Keeping the public safe and healthy</b>				
Mayoral control of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions where boundaries align^			✓	✓
Mayoral control of Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) functions where boundaries align^			✓	✓
Clear defined role in local resilience*		✓	✓	✓
Where desired, offer MCAs a duty for improving the public's health (concurrently with local authorities)		✓	✓	✓

(\*) refers to functions which are only applicable to combined authorities as opposed to county councils

(^) refers to functions which are only applicable to mayoral combined authorities

## Annex A: Underpinning Legislation

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 (the 2016 Act) received Royal Assent on 28 January 2016. It amends the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 to facilitate the implementation of far more ambitious and wide-ranging devolution agreements with combined authority areas and with other areas. It is enabling legislation which provides a legislative framework which can be applied flexibly to different areas by secondary legislation. In particular, secondary legislation may:

- confer any local government function on a combined authority;
- confer any public authority function on a combined authority;
- provide for an elected mayor for a combined authority's area who would exercise specified functions individually and chair the authority;
- provide for the mayor to undertake the functions of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the combined authority area (in place of the Police and Crime Commissioner); and
- confer any public authority function on a county council or district council.

In addition, the 2016 Act's amendments to the 2009 Act streamline the process for establishing and changing the area of a combined authority, remove geographical limitations as to the establishment of combined authorities, and provide for streamlined governance reforms where these are agreed by one or more of the councils involved.

## Annex B: English Devolution Accountability Framework

The [English Devolution Accountability Framework](#)<sup>11</sup> (EDAF), which was first published in March 2023, delivers on the Levelling Up White Paper commitment to publish a new accountability framework to apply to all English institutions with devolved powers.

The EDAF contains a commitment to be republished and, where appropriate, updated alongside the Annual Report on Devolution. Following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024, the first of these updates will be due in the 2024-25 edition of the Annual Report on Devolution.

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<sup>11</sup> [English Devolution Accountability Framework](#) – Published 16 March 2023