

London's place in the Government's devolution reforms

City Hall and London skyline

Key information

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Introduction

The GLA Oversight Committee is investigating the potential impacts on the Greater London Authority (hereafter “GLA”) of the Government’s proposals to introduce greater devolved powers as outlined in the English Devolution White Paper.

Investigation aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

Ahead of the introduction of the English Devolution Bill during the current parliamentary session, this investigation will aim to:

- Examine the functioning of London’s current devolution settlement, the associated successes and challenges, and its alignment with the government’s proposed devolution plans;
- Identify priority areas for London in any new devolution settlement;
- Assess the opportunities available to London through the English Devolution White Paper and the proposed devolution framework in the English Devolution Bill; and
- Consider the views of Londoners on the powers of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly.

Key issues

On 16 December 2024, the Government outlined its proposals for a new devolution framework in the English Devolution White Paper. These include achieving universal coverage in England of Strategic Authorities, formalising the powers associated with each type of Strategic Authority in legislation, and establishing a new Integrated Settlement that will provide Mayoral Strategic Authorities with a consolidated budget across housing, regeneration, local growth, local transport, skills, retrofit, and employment support. The English Devolution White Paper outlines a range of powers the Government aims to provide to Mayors in the areas of transport, skills and employment support, housing and planning, environment and climate change, business and research.

The English Devolution White Paper proposes examining the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended) “to remove any unnecessary or dated provisions and ensure the Act is fit to support the capital’s continued growth and prosperity”. Acknowledging the capital’s bespoke arrangements, the Government states that it will work with the GLA to ensure London “benefits from new powers and funding being made available to other Strategic Authorities”, including how an Integrated Settlement could be applied to the GLA from 2026-27. It also emphasises the importance of London learning from innovative approaches adopted by its international competitors.

As part of its plans for a new devolution framework, the government has recommitted to the English Devolution Bill, which is due to be introduced during the current parliamentary session.

Key questions

1. How are London’s current devolution settlement and powers currently working? What are the advantages, disadvantages, successes, and challenges of the current settlement?
2. What gaps and/or inconsistencies have emerged in London’s devolution settlement that could be addressed through new government policies or legislative action? How can any further devolution to London be balanced with appropriate scrutiny arrangements to ensure the Mayor is held properly to account?
3. What are the aims of the Government’s devolution plans for Mayoral authorities and how do they align with **a)** the GLA’s goals and aims? and **b)** the GLA’s current powers and settlement?
4. What can London learn from the powers and policy approaches adopted by other global city authorities?
5. What powers do Londoners want the Mayor of London and the London Assembly to hold?

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