

THE DEVO 3.0 REVIEW

**LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR
MORE AND BETTER DEVOLUTION**

An Audit of Devolution Decision Makers'
and Opinion Formers' Views for the
UK2070 Commission

Review conducted by
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THE HARD EVIDENCE UNCOVERED BY THE UK 2070 COMMISSION SHOWS THAT WE REMAIN ONE OF THE MOST UNEQUAL AND DIVIDED NATIONS IN EUROPE.

It therefore concluded that devolution and, in particular, devolving greater powers and decision making, could be the key to rebalancing the UK economy as well as civic and democratic renewal.

Recent and increased political interest in English devolution has been welcome but it does not add up to a vision of a third wave of devolution. DevoConnect was therefore commissioned to undertake an audit of decision makers and opinion formers to review the strengths and weaknesses of the Metro Mayoral model of devolution and identify what in the long term more and better devolution looks like.

Forty two individuals central to the future of devolution - including Metro Mayors, key local authority leaders, think tanks, advocacy groups, quangos and business associations as well as Parliamentarians who have been particularly active on the issue - responded to a questionnaire. This report is both a qualitative and quantitative summary of their responses.

PART I: THE CITY REGION METRO MAYORAL MODEL - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The overwhelming majority of those audited considered that the Metro Mayoral model was working well or very well. It was felt that Metro Mayors are delivering three key benefits:

- joined up, longer term policy solutions
- better accountability and leadership
- by doing politics at the level of a place, they are ensuring more engagement

Conversely, four main weaknesses were identified:

- insufficient power and resources
- that devolution has been a piecemeal, somewhat inflexible, stop-start, top down policy made in Whitehall
- overlapping roles with other organisations are creating confusion
- it does not provide for sufficient scrutiny or engagement

The overwhelming majority disagreed that existing devolution arrangements provided sufficient powers and funding to Metro Mayors. The overwhelming majority also disagreed that it is right for the Government to be cautious in limiting the scope of devolution.

The overwhelming majority agreed that the Government's approach to English devolution should be more systematic/comprehensive and that the proposal to '*level up*' Metro Mayor powers for all combined authorities is a good idea.

Opinions on whether it should be necessary for an area to have an elected Mayor as a pre-requisite of any devolution deal that includes delegation of significant sums were divided: 20 disagreed, 15 agreed.

In order to reduce inequalities between regions Metro Mayors should take action to secure: transport and infrastructure investment; education and skills investment; and the further devolution of powers.

To reduce inequalities within regions Metro Mayors should deliver inclusive growth with a focus on: employment and skills; transport infrastructure; and health.

To achieve productivity and growth the top actions Metro Mayors should focus on are: transport/connectivity, particularly intra-regionally; skills investment; closer working with the private sector; and the creation of local industrial strategies.

To increase democratic participation in decisions the top actions Metro Mayors should take are: consulting the public directly on decisions; increasing the visibility of decisions and the impact they have; and the devolution of further powers (increasing the importance of the decisions made.)

The next Government should provide Metro Mayors with a positive and determined, permissive and flexible, approach to devolution; more powers; and more funding.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PART II: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR DEVOLUTION - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The lessons identified from *'Devo 1.0'* (the devolution to the English regions in the 2000s) are that: devolution needs to be linked to a real sense of identity (*'not a point on a compass'*); one size never fits all; and devolution should be done properly not half-heartedly - it cannot, for example, be a temporary *'creature of Government'* but something long term, *'owned'* by the people in that area.

The main lesson learnt from devolution in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland is that the genuine devolution of political and fiscal power has had a noticeable positive impact on a national sense of identity and an enhanced sense of ownership of the democratic institutions.

The majority agreed that the next chapter of devolution should be accompanied by reform of local government (but it should not be a pre-condition or a reason for further delay).

Almost all agreed the Government should deliver real devolution for certain policy areas and not delegation or co-decision-making. The priority policy areas for such devolution were: transport; education and skills, housing; and health and social care.

A small majority agreed the Government should introduce Parliamentary Committees and Cabinet positions which recognise and respond to the trans-regional arrangements of the North, Midlands, South East, etc.. There were, however, some notable reservations.

The overwhelming majority agreed devolution deals should eventually cover the whole of England and the majority said that five years was an appropriate timeframe for such devolution to be rolled out.

A large majority of respondents said the purpose of devolution in England was either improved economic performance, including rebalancing the economy, or better, more democratic government, including better public services; or both.

A majority said better devolution was a principle and a process not a blueprint or an event; others put forward a specific proposal or outcome such as a federal UK, fiscal devolution, or better life chances. The Government should provide clarity, certainty and coherence regarding devolution and make devolution one of its top five priorities.

EMERGING CONCLUSIONS: TEN PRINCIPLES FOR DEVO 3.0

The following consensus conclusions emerge as potential principles that should inform the next wave of devolution:

1. Devolution must be a top five priority for the Government which should be **clear about the purposes of devolution**: supporting a new Treasury objective of rebalancing the economy geographically; creating more democratic governance; and the better delivery of public services.
2. The Government needs to have a **coherent and systematic approach** to devolution. The goal should be to agree devolution deals across the whole of England in the next five years.
3. The Government should commit to a **national dialogue** on the benefits of, and need for, devolution as well as a programme of **focused dialogue** with sub regional partners.
4. In the short term, there is a need for **a settlement with existing elected Mayors** focused on the devolution of all adult skills funding and powers; NIC's recommendation on devolving transport and other infrastructure spending; and some elements of fiscal devolution.
5. In the medium term, the Government must set out a **clear devolution framework**, or continuum, showing the range of current Government powers and funding suitable for devolving and which can be accessed as capacity and competence, as well as leadership and demand, becomes available at the devolved level.
6. The Government should publicly acknowledge that devolution is a process as well as a principle: something that can, and will, only be delivered in **partnership** with existing elected Mayors and local government as well as business and other stakeholders.
7. The next wave of devolution in England should *not* be conditional on local government reform but ultimately **what is needed is triple devolution**: to local government; to the sub-regional (Mayoral) level; and to the sub-national level, i.e. the North, the Midlands, London and the wider South East.
8. The next wave of devolution must not be *'half hearted'* nor *'one size fits all'*. Devo 3.0 needs to signify **the end of imposed blueprints** and shift the emphasis towards local and sub-regional partners taking the lead in agreeing deals. The Metro Mayoral model should not be the only model permitted.
9. A number of important issues need to be better understood and addressed: the **diversity deficit**, especially regards gender; and **the arrangements for scrutiny** of devolved structures at the sub-regional or city region level, as well as Westminster and Whitehall levels.
10. A Secretary of State should be appointed to lead the **implementation** of devolution. All Government Departments - including HMT and relevant quangos - need to be genuinely committed to the principle, and support the process, of devolution and rebalancing the economy.

INTRODUCTION

SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS HAVE SPENT THE LAST 50 YEARS TRYING TO REBALANCE THE UK ECONOMY AND CREATE A FAIRER AND STRONGER NATION.

However, the hard evidence uncovered by the UK 2070 Commission shows that we remain one of the most unequal and divided nations in Europe. 72% of the UK's regions have productivity rates lower than the national average, with some places only 65% of the average and others at 172%.

The 2070 Commission Second Report concluded that devolution and, in particular, devolving greater powers and decision making, could be the key to rebalancing the UK economy as well as delivering civic and democratic renewal. It identified seven national priorities for action including:

“accelerate devolution: devolve decisions about regional economies to all regions, not just those with government-sanctioned deals; introduce Parliamentary Committees and Cabinet positions which recognise and respond to the Powerhouses of the North, Midlands, South West and South East.”

Recent and increased political interest in English devolution has been welcome but so far what has been said or promised does not add up to a vision of what a third wave of devolution (*'Devo 3.0'*) should look like; how it could be a solution for all parts of England; and what is required over the long term to redress regional economic imbalance and systemic democratic centralisation.

DevoConnect were therefore commissioned by the UK2070 Commission to undertake an audit of decision makers' and opinion formers' views: specifically to review the lessons of devolution to the regions in the 2000s (Devo 1.0) and the current Metro Mayoral wave of devolution (Devo 2.0); and identify what, in the longer term, more and better devolution looks like, particularly how it might help redress both spatial economic inequality and the democratic deficit.

The Devo 3.0 Review is designed to re-invigorate the debate on better devolution and provide a solid foundation and evidence base to consider increasing and strengthening devolved decision making and powers. Its conclusions will be of interest not only to the UK2070 Commission but to a wider audience, including all those who are considering future policy development on devolution.

79 DECISION MAKERS AND OPINION FORMERS WITH A WELL-KNOWN AND HIGH LEVEL INTEREST IN DEVOLUTION WERE INVITED TO CONTRIBUTE - BY EMAIL, ONLINE SURVEY OR THROUGH INTERVIEW - TO THE AUDIT.

These included all Metro Mayors, local authority leaders, think tanks, advocacy groups, and business associations as well as MPs and Peers who have been particularly active on the issue, for example a chair of one of the regional APPGs.

Requests to contribute via a questionnaire were sent out in the middle of October with a deadline for submissions of 13th November. In all 42 were returned. Of these 12 did not wish their comments to be quoted directly. There was a high level of response from each group of invitees - as identified above - with the exception of MPs, for whom the general election intervened.

This report is a summary of what was said in response to the 27 questions. Where possible we have sought to include a quantification of the views expressed but largely this should be read as a qualitative survey of the opinions of a group of extremely experienced devolution experts drawn from across the political spectrum. Those who contributed to the Devo 3.0 Review were:

Metro Mayors

Andy Burnham, Greater Manchester
Jamie Driscoll, North of Tyne
Dan Jarvis, Sheffield City Region
James Palmer, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Mayor of London's Office
Mayor of Liverpool City Region's Office
Mayor of West Midlands' Office

LA Leader/Mayor or spokesperson

Cllr Judith Blake, Leader, Leeds City Council
Rebecca Cox, Principal Policy Advisor, Local Government Association
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe, Chair WYCA and Leader, Bradford Council
Cllr James Jamieson, Chairman, Local Government Association
John O'Brien, Chief Executive, London Councils
Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol
Dick Sorabji, Corporate Director of Policy and Public Affairs, London Councils
Tom Warburton, Director of City Futures, Newcastle City Council

Peer or MP

Lord Foulkes, Co-Chair, Reform Decentralisation and Devolution APPG
Lord Michael Heseltine, former Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Jim O'Neill, Vice Chair, Northern Powerhouse Partnership
Lucy Powell MP, Manchester Central, Chair APPG for Greater Manchester
Lord Wrigglesworth, former Deputy Chairman Regional Growth Fund Advisory Board

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

Think tank/advocacy/business group

Sir John Armitt, Chairman, National Infrastructure Commission
Phillip Blond, Director, ResPublica
Richard Blyth, Head of Policy, RTPi
Arianna Giovannini, Interim Director, IPPR North
Mark Goldstone, Head of Policy and Representation, West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
Mike Hawking, Policy and Partnerships Manager, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Jim Hubbard, Head of Regional Policy, CBI
Mark Livesey, CEO, LEP Network
Kathryn Mackridge, Policy Officer for Public Services, TUC
Adam Marshall, Director-General, British Chambers of Commerce
Sasha Morgan, Head of Secretariat for Social Mobility Commission
Chris Murray, Director, Core Cities
Henri Murison, Director, Northern Powerhouse Partnership
Akash Paun, Senior Fellow, Institute for Government
Edna Robinson, Chair, People's Powerhouse/Trafford Housing Trust
Ben Rogers, Founding Director, Centre for London
Jonathan Werran, Chief Executive, Localis

Academic/independent commentator

Sir Howard Bernstein, former Chief Executive, Manchester City Council
Duncan Bowie, Senior Research Associate, Bartlett School of Planning, University College London
Des McNulty, Assistant Vice-Principal, University of Glasgow
Rt Hon Nick Raynsford, Former Minister and Deputy Chairman, Crossrail
Jane Thomas, former Director, Campaign for English Regions

PART I: THE CITY REGION METRO MAYORAL MODEL

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

1 Is the Mayoral or combined authority system working?

Question: How well does the Mayoral or combined authority system work in your area (if applicable)?

27 respondents answered this question with 13 respondents saying ‘well’ - including ‘reasonably well’, ‘pretty well’ or ‘fairly well’ - and a further 11 saying ‘very well’ (88% of respondees) . A number of respondents said it was important ‘not to over claim’ but said Metro Mayors were now firmly established within the political firmament. Just three respondees made a negative comment. 15 said the question was not applicable to them.

You can't imagine anyone wanting to get rid of the Mayor role or taking significant powers back to central Government, which is usually a good sign that reforms have been embedded and also make sense to voters and people at various levels of Government.
Akash Paun, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Government

The West Midlands Combined Authority and Mayor system is performing very well, based on progress against public commitments, the Annual Plan, national recognition given to good performance in specific functions, and outcomes such as the recent performance of the regional economy. **Anonymous respondent on ‘added value’**

Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, as well as London, were frequently cited as examples of where the Mayor was ‘embedded’, had ambition and was delivering ‘signature’ projects that would not have happened without devolution. However, **all seven Metro Mayors** who responded commented that, although it is early days, collective working with a figurehead is making a difference:

Yes, we are looking at projects or opportunities that were previously beyond possibility. **James Palmer, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

PART I:

Very well considering the extent of powers which have actually been devolved.

Anonymous respondent

*There is a growing sense that devolution is a solution to the chaos of Westminster. It's green shoots here - dysfunctional there. **Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester***

*WYCA works well - leaders come together and decide priorities and we stick with them. We need to keep working on relationships but there are benefits for all constituent members. West Yorks growth deal means we are unique amongst CAs without a Mayor but we do have some money! Transport work is very good. Three more new stations delivered and one more planned. The Combined Authority is part of us - part of the five local authorities - we are very collective, sometimes go bit slower but we do go together. We have all got things which wouldn't have got without CA. **Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe, Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA),***

Those who were negative referred to a specific set of circumstances, for example the situation in North of Tyne which does not have the same boundaries as the North East Combined Authority, which '*limits the development of transport*'. South Yorkshire was also cited for slow progress due to its local authorities being divided over their long-term devolution ambitions.

*What the South Yorkshire model has exposed is that unless there is significant buy in from the start for an agreed geography you are going to encounter problems. Much is made of the GM model but that was a plan 20 years in the making. **Jane Thomas, former Director of the Campaign for English Regions***

2 The strengths and weaknesses of existing city region Metro Mayoral or Combined Authority Models

Please state the strengths of the existing city region Metro Mayoral or combined authority models

Respondents referenced three main strengths of the existing models:

- **Delivering joined up, long term solutions**
- **Acting as spokesperson and providing clear accountability**
- **Doing politics at the level of a place ensuring more engagement**

Delivering joined up, long term solutions (21 respondents, 50%)

Where the model allows the integration of a number of aspects of Government spending at a place level it is particularly beneficial.

Richard Blyth, Head of Policy at the RTPi

Key strength is that it helps those city regions to coordinate a more ambitious and more comprehensive infrastructure policy which can be linked to skills and housing and therefore deliver broader economic development. **Sir John Armitt, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC)**

We think the major strength of the model is to give a path by which leaders can implement much longer-term plans for their region reflecting local priorities linked to local accountability. **Sasha Morgan, Head of Secretariat for Social Mobility Commission**

The ability to convene across the public and private sector; to bring together a medium to long term strategy; and to prioritise what

resources are available, working together with the business community. **Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chamber of Commerce**

The current bus consultation in Greater Manchester demonstrates that significant change, such as to introduce London style bus networks, is already possible. **Henri Murison, Director, NPP**

Acting as spokesperson and providing clear accountability (17 respondents, 41%)

An elected Mayor's key strength - in the view of the majority of respondents - is their accountability combined with their 'soft' powers - such as convening - which provides for a more coherent regional voice. For Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of the North of Tyne, this is 'long overdue' pointing out that in his area 'there is now regional leadership for the first time in years'. Conversely, **Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe, Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority**, pointed out that a weakness of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is that there is no direct mandate from the public.

As Chair of the Combined Authority, and also as a member of the LEP, the Mayor provides strong leadership and a single point of democratic accountability to integrate and streamline decision-making on local programmes and investments. **Dan Jarvis, Mayor of Sheffield City Region**

PART I:

Metro Mayors are a more accountable representative for making significant decisions concerning the area, rather than an unknown civil servant in Whitehall. Kathryn Mackridge, Policy Officer at the TUC

Jonathan Werran, Chief Executive of Localis, said Mayor's greatest strength is 'their convening power - their ability to secure business and civic backing for change.' This was a view echoed by an anonymous contributor:

'Businesses in areas with devolution deals have cited a range of positives that have come from a deal. They include the raised international profile that having a Metro Mayor brings, clarity over the strategic direction, increased collaboration with neighbours across the region and the country, as well as a greater focus on inclusive growth, and momentum on key local policy decisions.'

Another **anonymous respondent** said: *'the Mayor of London is one of a handful of politicians who can command the front page tomorrow.'*

A Mayor, distinct from local authority leaders, does strengthen accountability and leadership and gives central Government confidence in quality of leadership and makes them more willing to devolve. Ben Rogers, Founding Director of the Centre for London

Doing politics at the level of a place ensuring more engagement (17 respondents, 41%)

There was a clear view that the focus on 'place' creates better politics, including that it affords greater participation and consultation. In effect, this amounts to a different way of doing politics as Mayors can draw on local knowledge which is better than relying on multiple Whitehall departments.

It starts from a better place - ie it is predicated on place which is a better foundation than Westminster's starting point which is based on primacy of party. And in the current Westminster impasse it is hard for a party to deliver radical agenda. Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

Bringing local leaders together in this way means more decisions are being made much closer to the people they affect rather than being done nationally in Westminster. This means the decisions can better reflect the needs and priorities of local places and communities. Dan Jarvis, Mayor of Sheffield City Region

Businesses in areas with devolution deals have cited a range of positives. They included the raised international profile, clarity over strategic direction, increased collaboration as well as a greater focus inclusive growth. Anonymous respondent

The TUC were very positive saying that *'there are some examples where good governance structures have been established to ensure access and representation of key partners and decision makers. For example, the TUC Midlands has a co-opted observer seat on the West Midlands Combined Authority.'*

Some comparisons were made between the London Mayoral model - twenty years old in 2020 - and the Metro Mayor model. Two chief differences were noted. First, that in London there is no statutory requirement for joint decision making by the Mayor with the Leaders of the London Boroughs. In the Metro Mayor model, the Mayor is the Chair of meetings of the constituent local authority Leaders, with whom joint decisions are mostly made. Second, the London model provides through the Assembly a clear scrutiny function, whereas in the Metro Mayoral model how decisions, and decision making, is scrutinised is less clear.

It was acknowledged that there were tensions between the Mayor for London and the Boroughs, although others pointed out that the *'connection with the Boroughs has been better over past 10 years and that there are now partnership boards and a bi-annual Congress of Leaders'*.

In many senses, the GM model is far superior to London which lacks the engagement of the local authorities - in other respects it isn't as good. I see the GM model as more effective in terms of streamlined governance and local authority buy-in to metro strategy but it lacks some of the powers of London. Bus regulation and franchising is the obvious area where London has had massive advantages, as well as infinitely greater Government funding support, for decades now. **Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester**

Given the potential of the Metro Mayor model - by which the Mayor and all constituent local authorities can agree and then get behind a plan - one respondent suggested that, for the five key strategies for which the Mayor of London is responsible, formal agreement with London Borough leaders should be considered.

Please state the weaknesses of the existing city region Metro Mayoral or combined authority models

Respondents reported four main weaknesses:

- **Insufficient resources and powers**
- **A piecemeal, inflexible, stop-start, top down policy made in London**
- **Overlapping roles with other organisations creating confusion**
- **Does not provide for sufficient scrutiny, engagement or diversity**

Insufficient resources and powers (19 respondents, 45%)

One **anonymous contributor** typified many responses when stating: *'there is a lack of resources and an ongoing reliance on centralised decision making from Westminster.'*

There were also comments from a Conservative and Labour Mayor respectively such as *'trying to pedal with the brakes on'* and *'holed below the water line.'* One Mayoral office spelt out why it currently feels like *'devolution with strings attached'*:

The Combined Authority's policy toolkit is incomplete, meaning we occasionally have to compromise fidelity or clarity, or make circuitous arguments for investment - for example in the areas of wellbeing and environmental action. The lack of sustainable funding is a significant barrier - this relates to capital, revenue and admin. It makes it complicated to plan long term investment strategies and pipeline with full confidence in their delivery. Similarly, reporting lines between sub-regional and national government are complex. The relationship with Departments is positive but still suffers from a client/master deficit.

PART I:

The Mayor of London's Office condemned the inability to levy taxes to meet the needs of the city: *'Other cities around the world have way more freedom.'* **Henri Murison, Director, NPP**, answered the question succinctly: *'The lack of significant meaningful fiscal devolution'*. **Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester**, pointed to a fundamental problem with current arrangements:

A Mayor inevitably creates expectations as a focal point for complaining but has not got the powers and funding, for example on transport, so you have accountability without genuine responsibility.

One respondent referred to this as the *'devolution deception'* - the mismatch whereby a Mayor is held accountable for an issue but does not have the powers or funding to properly address - improve or reform - the issue. **Sir John Armitt, Chair of the NIC**, put it this way:

Not sure I would want to put myself up for that role without the fiscal freedom/financial wherewithal to ensure I could deliver. Politically Mayors are in a difficult position.

A piecemeal, inflexible, stop-start, top down policy made in Whitehall (13 respondents, 31%)

A number of contributors pointed out that the fact that the Government was only interested in one specific model meant large parts of the country - especially rural and coastal communities - are without devolution. In some areas, after delay, deals were offered but local party politics often took over causing further delay and on at least one occasion, *'by the time the local partners were positive again the Government had lost interest.'*

The models are generally imposed top-down by Government and don't necessarily recognise the different geographies, histories, relationships and priorities of different areas. What has been devolved is actually relatively small in comparison to the challenge of rebalancing and local growth, and is functional, not fiscal. Budgeting is still short term and only done across a limited set of areas, with the possible exception of Greater Manchester, and even there, does not include a full-enough set of responsibilities and spending ability for skills.

There was criticism too of the Government's inconsistent approach, for example, the apparent insistence on deals only for *'functioning economic areas'* and then agreeing the North of Tyne deal, which excludes Gateshead and South Tyneside travel to work area (TTWA).

Lord Heseltine suggested there may be a role for the Boundary Commission to recommend readjustments in Metro Mayoral boundaries so that local economics can be better reflected.

Overlapping roles with other organisations creating confusion (10 respondents, 24%)

There was a clear view that the role of a Metro Mayor and how they work with the Combined Authority or other organisations is not understood and is often confusing.

The British Chambers of Commerce pointed out that business communities had reported different levels of engagement from Mayors on both strategy development and delivery, with some reporting a more positive experience than others. **Dr Adam Marshall, Director-General of the British Chambers of Commerce**

There were some comments on *'internal squabbling about where investment takes place'* which can lead to *'the need to spread the jam.'* **Nick Raynsford, Deputy Chairman of Crossrail**, referenced what he saw as the inevitable tensions between local authorities and Metro Mayors given the Mayor has both strategic and delivery powers. One respondent pointed out: *'If the constituent parts of the Combined Authority are not working well together the Mayor can be ineffective.'* Another simply said *'parochialism is endemic'*. Others were disappointed that party politics still dominated Mayoral politics and emphasised the importance of the Mayor's personality.

Some called for clarity of Combined Authority functions which should be assessed within the context of *'constrained'* local authorities. In this respect, the model was criticised for paying insufficient attention to the importance of *'double devolution'* - the need to empower local authorities as well as Metro Mayors. The issue of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) was also raised:

The balancing act with multiple LEPs is a weakness and should be resolved by a rationalisation of LEPs in combined authorities and co-terminosity. **Jonathan Werran, Chief Executive of Localis**

Does not provide for sufficient scrutiny, engagement or diversity (5 respondents, 12%).

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) were one of a number of organisations to point out that Metro Mayors, unlike the London Mayor, currently lack formal mechanisms for scrutiny of their decisions.

My sense is that the scrutiny mechanisms at the devolved level are relatively weak and if people are making case for significant further powers/autonomy to be transferred to combined authorities then more attention to scrutiny of those powers and how that money is spent will be needed. **Akash Paun, the Institute for Government**

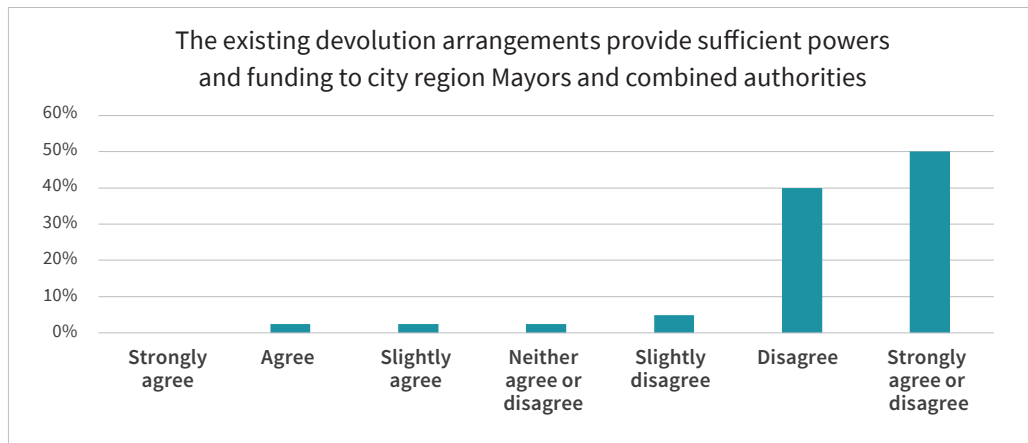
Mayors should really worry about making mistakes - the fact that others will pick up the pieces is really the only credible argument against devolution. So far Whitehall has produced unreasonable solutions so a third party should come up with an answer for accountability. **Anonymous contributor** on getting the failure regime correct

Others suggested the National Audit Office (NAO) could have a bigger role in the future and could audit decision making including value for money and that greater scrutiny by way of a city or sub regional Select Committee of MPs - eg for Greater Manchester or the West Midlands - was *'an interesting idea'*.

Some businesses found that the Metro Mayor had brought about additional bureaucracy and complexity. The British Chamber of Commerce pointed out that the failure by some Mayors to engage business as an equal partner - both in their strategizing and delivery - was a notable weakness. Others commented on the lack of gender diversity.

A lack of opportunity for genuine public engagement, other than at the ballot box. The lack of diversity within local government leadership has led to a gender imbalance in Mayoral Cabinets - though attempts have been made to address this artificially by creating 'deputy' cabinet members. **Mike Hawking, JRF**

3 Views on existing devolution



All respondents answered this question and the majority, 38 respondents (90%), either disagreed slightly, disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, with all of the Metro Mayors stating they wanted more powers and funding.

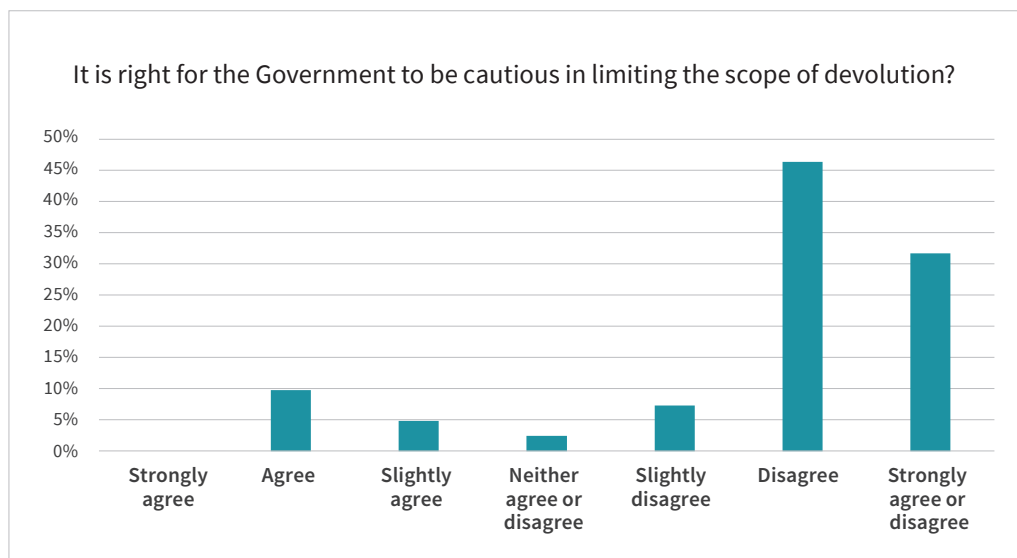
Although, the question was formulated as an agree-disagree question, some respondents took the opportunity to expand on their initial response. The primary theme of nearly all negative responses was criticism of the extent of existing devolved powers, with one respondent as previously noted going as far as to describe them as the ‘*devolution deception*’.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester was typical of those who disagreed: ‘*If you’re going to go for devolution, you need to really go for it. ‘Dipping your toe’ does not work.*’ **James Palmer, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**, put this more strongly: ‘*The deals are weak, which means we have to go to Whitehall every time. That’s not devolution, that’s devolution as long as you do what Mummy says.*’

At present the approach has been piecemeal and ad hoc with no clear strategy or roadmap for how devolution will emerge. It is not clear whether those with deals are on a path to further devolution or indeed what the strategy is for rolling it out to those areas without devolution deals. **Henri Murison, Director, NPP.**

Elements of power have been devolved across a lot of the important areas but it’s quite partial in all of those areas and the power is still subject to constraints imposed from the centre. That makes it harder for any single devolved body to join up and be strategic as they are being held to account in different ways by separate Government departments. **Akash Paun, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Government**

Only two respondents agreed. **Lord Wrigglesworth** thought that the powers were sufficient ‘*for the time being.*’ **Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees**, who neither agreed nor disagreed, suggested that the powers devolved should depend on the effective working of the Combined Authority with its ‘*constituent authorities*’, highlighting the sometimes unresolved tensions between CAs and LAs.



All respondents answered this question with 35 respondents (83%) disagreeing with this statement. Six agreed with one neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

One **anonymous response**, typified many who disagreed with the statement, stating:

I do not see why the Government should be cautious... the problem is that there has always been a cautious 'half baked' approach.

Another **anonymous contributor** was more critical:

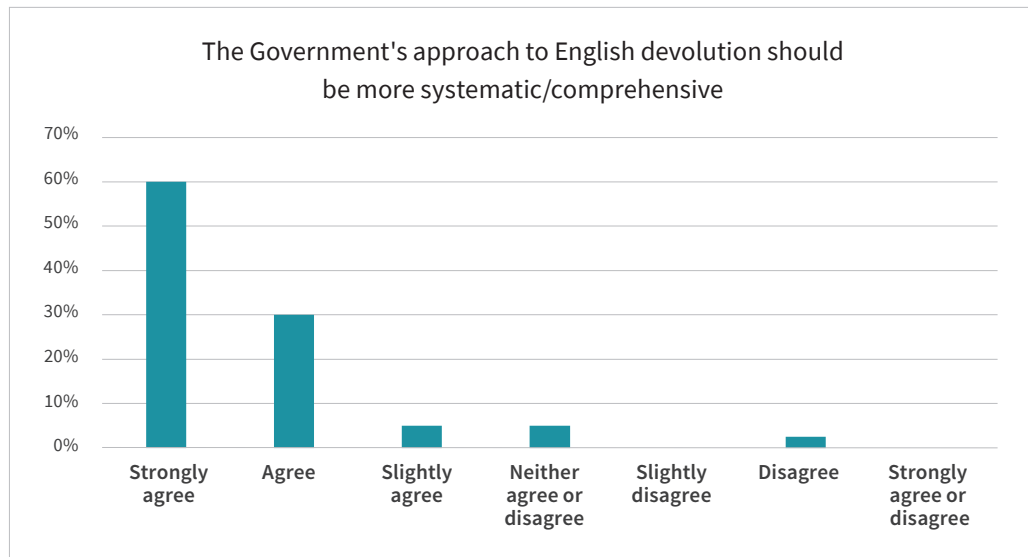
Fear of a broken fingernail has been used too long to stop progress towards devolution.

Henri Murison, Director, NPP, took a more nuanced view:

The government was right to initially be cautious in devolving power and funding as transparency and accountability in public spending decisions are of course incredibly important. However, where new structures have shown that they have the capability and capacity to deliver devolution then the government must be bolder in devolving further powers and funding where it makes sense to do so.

Of those who didn't disagree with the statement, nearly all cited a lack of clear objectives or purpose on the part of the Government in the area of devolution. For example **Duncan Bowie, Senior Research Associate, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL**, stated *'The Government is unclear as to its objectives in relation to devolution.'*

PART I:



The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with 38 out of 42 respondents - 90% - agreeing. Two neither agreed nor disagreed, one disagreed, and one chose not to answer.

Many respondents who agreed with the statement suggested that central Government needed to be clearer on what it thought the purposes of devolution were:

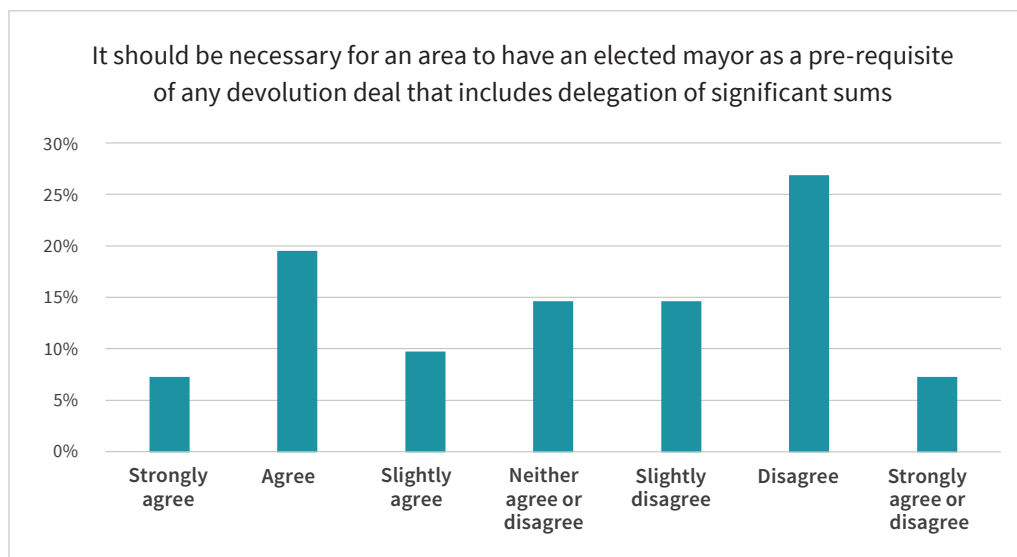
The Government's approach in recent years has been ad hoc and conducted without an overarching framework to work within or a national goal to aim towards. **Mayor of London's Office**

There was a general sense even within those who agreed that, as **Arianna Giovannini, Interim Director of IPPR North**, noted, a 'one size fits all approach' was not a good idea, and a large number used that exact phrasing or similar language.

Others pointed out the question of the form of devolution for each area should not be answered by the Government:

Requirements may be different in different places, i.e. counties may need fewer powers than cities. **Dr Adam Marshall, Director-General of the British Chambers of Commerce**

Lord O'Neill neither agreed nor disagreed, stating that 'systematic' devolution was "against the spirit of devolution [which] can only happen where local authorities want the extra accountability to go with the responsibility."



All respondents apart from one answered this question. Overall, more respondents disagreed than agreed, with overall 20 respondents disagreeing (49%), 15 respondents (37%) agreeing and 6 respondents (15%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Sir John Armitt, Chair of the NIC, echoed many other respondents by qualifying his support for the Mayoral model with a clear suggestion that devolution proposals should respond and adapt to places and not the other way around. He stated:

Other models of accountability may work. What is important is getting the right option for the right area.

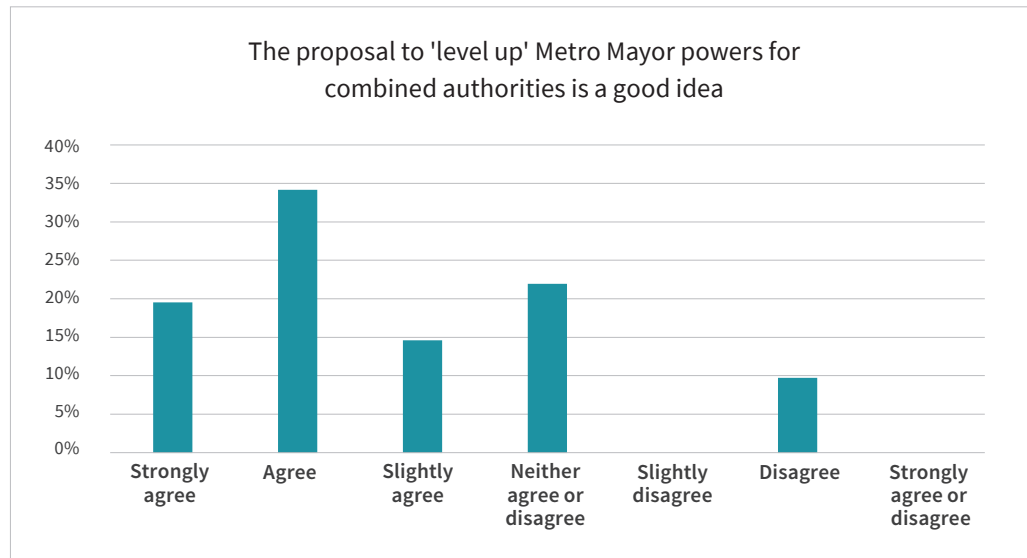
Ben Rogers, Founding Director of the Centre for London echoed this, slightly disagreeing with the statement and saying: *'I don't think the case for a Mayor is so compelling that if an area doesn't want a Mayor that it should get in the way of devolution'*. **Henri Murison, Director, NPP**, neither agreeing nor disagreeing said: *'the focus should be less about a specific structure and more about powers and responsibilities'*.

There was a different response from the Metro Mayors themselves. Four of the seven Mayors who responded agreed to one extent or another, including **Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough James Palmer**, who stated that his reasons for doing so centred on accountability: *'You need somebody who is answerable and that's tremendously important'*.

Andy Burnham neither agreed nor disagreed, but rather *"strongly recommended"* the Mayoral model for other areas, adding, *'If someone is accountable then that helps with delivery.. but devolution by definition cannot and should not be imposed. And certainly, less valid/appropriate in rural/dispersed areas.'*

Jamie Driscoll Mayor of the North of Tyne indicated that he strongly agreed for city regions but neither agreed nor disagreed for more rural areas.

PART I:



All but two respondents answered this question, with a clear majority agreeing. 28 of those who responded (70%) agreed and just 4 respondents (10%) disagreed. 8 respondents (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

This response is consistent with previous answers where there were clear majorities for the view that the Government had not devolved sufficient powers and funding and had been too cautious in limiting the scope of devolution. However, it should be noted that no respondent expressed the view that the powers already devolved to Manchester were sufficient. This was emphasised by **Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, disagreeing with the statement**

Levelling up is a problematic concept as it implies levelling up to areas that have reached their optimum devolution and there is plenty more that Greater Manchester and London want. What is required is a devolution framework/continuum and then different areas can move up towards full devolution as and when is appropriate for them.

Phillip Blond, Director of Respublica, said: *'we wouldn't want Manchester to become a ceiling on devolved powers.'* **Lucy Powell, MP for Manchester Central**, who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, echoed this: *'we would rather not have Manchester's devolution settlement seen as a ceiling; Manchester instead should be the forerunner.'*

Out of the Metro Mayors who participated, four of those with less powers than Greater Manchester or London agreed, indicating an eagerness to move beyond the powers as currently devolved. **Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of the North of Tyne**, took a more nuanced position, stating that he would strongly agree with the statement *'if it were true'* but complained that this was *'not what the Government has offered in practice.'*

Echoing the suggestion of Andy Burnham, **Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of the North of Tyne** also said his alternative vision would be *'a devolution framework that takes us all the way beyond the powers London currently has, and where the powers and budgets can be drawn down when the regions choose and are demonstrably capable of managing them.'*

4 Key actions city region Metro Mayors and combined authorities should take to:

Reduce inequalities between regions?

All respondents but one answered this question. Opinion was divided between those who thought that reducing inequalities between regions should be a priority for Mayors and those who thought it incidental to their work to reduce inequality within a region.

However nine respondents thought such action was outside the scope of a Metro Mayor's remit.

Henri Murison, Director, NPP, said *'the primary way to narrow the north-south economic divide is to eliminate the productivity gap...One primary cause [of which] is poor transport between and within regions. Education and skills would be the next area of priority.'* In total three strands emerged among the 32 respondents; 76%, felt there was a role for Mayors to reduce inequalities:

- **Transport and infrastructure investment (17 respondents, 53%).**

The most popular answer was investment in transport and infrastructure because physical infrastructure crosses regional boundaries. **Jim Hubbard, Head of Regional Policy at the CBI** suggested that, after education and skills, *'transport links that widen access to labour'* were the most important investment Metro Mayors could make, though this was framed as a proposal to unlock regional growth rather than reduce inequality. **Dan Jarvis, Mayor of Sheffield City Region** suggested that Metro Mayors could employ *'joint working, as through Transport for the North, on major transport infrastructure programmes.'*

- **Education and skills investment (9 respondents, 28%).**

Education and skills investment came a close second, often linked directly with the suggestion of transport investment.

Mark Goldstone of the West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, said that Metro Mayors and combined authorities should *'ensure that transport and infrastructure strategies take account of adjoining regions so that people are able to access education and employment opportunities between regions.'*

- **Further devolution of powers (8 respondents, 25%).**

Many of the respondents were keen to suggest that further devolution of powers could reduce inequality between regions.

Mike Hawking, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, for example, suggested asking *'for further devolution of powers and funding.'* One respondent suggested *'fiscal devolution for London leading to less reliance on national funding could have knock on effects; creating incentives to invest across the whole of England.'*

An **anonymous Mayor** made the case for *'significant, single-pot devolution of funding to CAs to invest in the delivery of their local industrial strategies.'*

PART I:

Of those who thought reducing inequalities between regions was beyond a Metro Mayor's remit there was a split between those, the clear majority, who said they *shouldn't* take action on this and the minority who said Metro Mayors *couldn't* take action. **Des McNulty, Assistant Vice-Principal of the University of Glasgow** suggested this should not be part of the Mayoral role, asking *'why would a Metro Mayor do that? I presume Metro Mayors would be seeking to get the best for their particular region.'*

Mayor of Bristol Marvin Rees added, *'is it the responsibility of Bristol to reduce inequality in Grimsby? What I can do, is to advocate for devolved leadership to Grimsby.'* **Duncan Bowie, Senior Research Associate, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL**, simply stated *'clearly they can't as any powers are limited to their own area.'*

However, Andy Burnham, Lucy Powell, and Edna Robinson - senior figures within the politics of Greater Manchester and the Northern Powerhouse - thought that this work integral to the role of the Metro Mayor.

Reduce inequalities within regions?

All but three respondents answered this question with many mentioning inclusive growth or the importance of balanced growth within a region. **Mike Hawking, Joseph Rowntree Foundation**, for example, couched his suggestion of transport investment around the need to:

ensure that policy making in their regions is conscious of the differing needs of places within their region and ensure that investment isn't just concentrated in the regional centre.

A number of those who cited inclusive growth in their response also noted the complexity of the problem of inequality and the need for an integrated approach across multiple fronts. **Des McNulty, Assistant Vice-Principal of the University of Glasgow** suggested that Mayors and Combined Authorities *'need policies that tackle place disadvantage but also types of disadvantage like health, ethnic minority, etc., it's a very complex process.'*

Three key areas were cited where Mayors could take action to help reduce regional inequalities within regions:

- **Employment and Skills (26 respondents, 66%),**

Mayor of Sheffield City Region, Dan Jarvis, said that he would like *'the ability to fully influence the education system in its entirety, with a defined role in primary, secondary and tertiary education.'* **Sasha Morgan, Head of Secretariat for Social Mobility Commission** was also keen to emphasise education powers, suggesting that combined authorities needed to see, *'better integration between education and skills planning... Particularly thinking about how Metro Mayors work with the academies, Regional Schools Commissioners, and the FE college sector.'*

- **Transport and infrastructure (11 respondents, 28%)**

Mike Hawking, Joseph Rowntree Foundation specifically suggested that *‘intra-regional transport should be a particular focus for addressing intra-regional inequalities... and Mayors should utilise powers around the delivery of bus services.’*

Other contributions included one that suggested much inequality could be reduced by *‘ensuring better coordination of activity between Health/DWP/Education/Police and Councils.’* Another said that the 33 Fairness Commissions *‘up and down the country’* should be looked at for what they are doing to try *‘to iron out inequalities’*.

- **Health (7 respondents, 18%)**

A number of respondents stated health as a key area in tackling inequalities for example **Phillip Blond, Director of Respublica** said: *‘None of the factors that influence health are all controlled by the NHS and yet Local Authorities don’t have control over health outcomes. Local Authorities should be the institutions for health of the 21st century, not the NHS.’* **Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol**, suggested investing in health should be a foundation of tackling inequality within a region, stating that one of the most important public policy priorities should be *‘investing in mental health and public health to get early interventions for people to build a foundation’*. **Jonathan Werran, Chief Executive of Localis**, suggested more specific proposals, putting forward the idea of a *‘Public Health Premium, modelled on the Pupil Premium’* in order to prioritise local areas with poor public health outcomes.

PART I:

Achieve productivity and growth in the wider region?

All but five respondents answered this question. There was a split between the majority who suggested specific priority policy areas and a minority who emphasised the frameworks within which these policies should be delivered. **Lucy Powell, MP for Manchester Central**, for example, was keen to ensure that her answers were understood within an inclusive growth framework, adding that: *‘Cities need to benefit the towns. Towns should not be competing with cities for things such as foreign direct investment.’*

Another **anonymous respondent** said that city regions and combined authorities needed to: *‘understand the economic interactions and flows within the wider region based on evidence, seeing these as two-way, and agreeing a package of investment between cities, city regions, and nearby places’*

To achieve productivity and growth in the wider region Metro Mayoral areas and Combined Authorities need to be able to:

- **Invest in education and skills (19 respondents, 51%)**

Investment in education and skills was often seen as an investment in people over physical infrastructure, a distinction made by a small number of respondents.

Lord Wrigglesworth, for example, stated that: *‘Regional economic development often focuses too much on physical rather than human assets... the focus should be people and changing culture in deprived areas to instil ambition’*.

Similarly, **Des McNulty, Assistant Vice-Principal of the University of Glasgow**, said, *‘Skills and talent development should represent the key sticky capital of the area rather than new buildings and new infrastructure’*

- **Invest in transport/connectivity, particularly intra-regionally (19 respondents, 51%)**

Transport came an equal second to investing in education and skills with 19 respondents mentioning it, often in relation to other areas of policy.

Sir John Armit, Chair of the NIC, for example, noted that: *‘linking transport, housing, skills, and employment is essential.’* An anonymous respondent spoke from personal experience in advocating for improved transport infrastructure: *‘I believe inter-regional connectivity is critical to productivity. National connections are good but inter-regionally they are very poor.’*

- **Achieve closer working with the private sector (7 respondents, 19%)**

A broader category which could be termed *‘closer working with the private sector’* was suggested. This covers attracting inward investment into an area, and working together toward closely-aligned goals. **Dr Adam Marshall, Director-General of the British Chambers of Commerce** suggested that local areas needed to: *‘develop the strongest possible partnership with the business community; businesses want to be treated as equals and not just as stakeholders, working together on the development and execution of growth strategy’*.

- **Develop Local Industrial Strategies (5 respondents, 14%)**

Whilst Local Industrial Strategies were sometimes mentioned alongside further private investment they are considered as key to productivity and investment.

Kathryn Mackridge, Policy Officer at the TUC noted that the creation of *‘high-quality employment standards’ was crucial to this objective and should form the core of ‘any skills strategy/local industrial strategy.’ Others called this approach a ‘growth strategy [which] puts growth into hard and soft economic metrics.’*

Jane Thomas, former Director of the Campaign for English Regions, said:

Go back and revisit the Productivity Reports of the Treasury in the noughties. Nothing has changed in terms of identifying the problems ie productivity issues, pull and push factors with labour markets, investment in transport and infrastructure, skills, etc.

PART I:

Increase democratic participation in decisions?

This question produced a variety of responses with a number of suggestions being mentioned only once. Three broad categories have been created in order to capture the most popular themes:

- **Involve the public directly in decisions (17 respondents, 40%)**

Various ways of involving the public directly in decisions were suggested, although sometimes the distinction between genuine involvement in the decision-making process and a wider engagement was blurred. **Jane Thomas, former Director of the Campaign for English Regions**, gave an example of how direct involvement could work in practice: *‘People do tend to engage with stuff that impacts on them, look at those pesky trees in Sheffield, so some of this is about narrative and engagement tools rather than reinventing the wheel.’*

Some clear models and frameworks emerged. **Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of the North of Tyne**, suggested a range of options for Metro Mayors and Combined Authorities to consider: *‘increase democratic economic models, cooperatives, CICs, community land trusts, citizens assemblies, and introduce local participatory budgeting.’* Other suggestions were more vague, yet still clearly advocated more local involvement. One Metro Mayors’ office noted that: *‘Double devolution’ is important, we need to empower local authorities and neighbourhoods as well as the metropolitan level... at the neighbourhood level people can be given tools and freedoms to develop their own responses and to shape their places.’*

- **Increase the visibility of decisions and the impact they have (12 respondents, 29%)**

Increasing the visibility of decisions was the next most popular category, this included a call for more local government involvement in the decision-making processes of combined authorities. Respondents who cited this were also interested in making the decision-making process more transparent and accessible. **Arianna Giovannini, Interim Director of IPPR North** suggested regular Mayoral-led community-involvement events, for example, *‘which could break down an abstract idea so as to make the benefit of devolution accessible and easy to understand to local people’.*

Many of the suggestions in this category were about making the workings of the devolved system more accessible to citizens. For example, **Edna Robinson, Chair of the People’s Powerhouse**, suggested that there needed to be a: *‘complete review of the current governance model for Mayors as it is currently broken — there is no deliberation with communities and accountability is not clear. There needs to be a restructuring of the democratic and policy development processes with genuine civil society engagement.’* **Lucy Powell, MP for Manchester Central**, chair of the Greater Manchester APPG stated: *‘We need to adjust processes to [involve] councillors, MPs, community groups. Where are their voices in some of the bigger decisions? How can those decision-making powers be devolved further down?’*

- **Delegate further powers
(5 respondents, 12%)**

Respondents strongly advocated in favour of further powers being devolved, which would in turn mean the public became more interested in decision-making at a city region level. **Dan Jarvis, Mayor of Sheffield City Region**, for example, stated: *‘True devolution of powers and funding would enable decisions to be made closer to local people, empowering people in decisions and engaging communities.’*

Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe, Chair of West Yorkshire Combined Authority, echoed this: *‘In London, where the the Mayor is responsible for TfL, there is greater public awareness and engagement. This automatically increases with increased in power and funding and with funding related to direct service delivery.’*

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, made a separate point regards political representation, stating that *‘we can’t deliver political inclusion independently of economic inclusion.’* He added, *‘Getting people from poorer backgrounds, women, and disabled people into (elected) office will bring more people in.’*

5 What does central Government need to do next?

A range of answers were given by all respondents. The following identifies where there was some emerging consensus:

The Government needs to adopt a positive and determined but permissive and flexible approach to devolution (22 respondents, 52%).

A clear majority emphasised that the Government's approach to devolution should be permissive and flexible as well as positive and determined. There is a need for far greater clarity and coherence from the Government and the following specific suggestions were made:

- An early statement of intent by the next Government, including that devolution is a 'top 5 priority'
- A new, clear framework (continuum) of powers and funding that could be devolved as capacity permits
- Not just a White Paper but a Spending Review that provides the capacity to deliver
- A clear commitment from all Government Departments to work towards devolution
- Mandate to other national bodies (quangos) to co-operate with, and support, Mayors
- Appointment of a Secretary of State responsible for Devolution
- Amendment to the Treasury Green Book to reflect long term ambition to rebalance UK economy

- Full implementation of the NIC's recommendations
- The moving of more civil servants to the regions and/or to regional offices

It should also adopt a '*deliberative approach*', including the fostering of a national debate about the importance of devolution and sub regional dialogue across England regards the right devolution solution in each area.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester said it was important that national politicians '*stopped promising things that weren't asked for*' and instead they should listen and deliver.

Lord Heseltine said the Government should formally commit to meeting with all Metro Mayors twice a year.

Sir Howard Bernstein called for '*a structured approach to functional and fiscal devolution - not a "one size fits all" approach but one which is related to earned autonomy.*'

Arianna Giovannini, Interim Director of IPPR North, said: '*Trust the Mayors more: let go of power and provide the resources needed to bring about real change.*'

A number of other comments were made:

There needs to be a clearer strategy for the North to address the North South divide, particularly around transport, infrastructure, economic decisions, and public expenditure - and further devolution. Lucy Powell, MP for Manchester Central

A commitment to deliver HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail in full. Anonymous respondent

An **anonymous contributor** said there was a need across the board for a more localist approach benefitting all devolved tiers:

Local government has clear views on the direction of policy change: Ministers and civil servants should take their lead from local places, rather than vice versa. Government should work closely with councils and others to design a long-term, sustainable settlement for local government, both for funding and public services.

Devolution should be the default mode with less focus on structures and governance and more on delivering outcomes. Anonymous contributor

Government must devolve more powers (14 respondents, 33%).

There was a strong sense that devolution must provide real powers - in other words the opportunity to affect change - and not just *'the transferring of responsibility for liabilities in a cost cutting exercise'*. Transport, adult skills (16 plus) and housing were most commonly referenced. A number of respondents referenced the fact that devolution offered an important opportunity to join up public services and that post Brexit localism in all its forms, including devolution to Metro Mayors *and* local government, should be to the fore.

A proper devolution framework, specifically including devolved housing budgets, full public transport regulatory powers, and direct allocation of national funds to Mayors. We must end the "guess-bid-wait" model of funding bids - it's no way to sensibly plan a modern country. Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of the North of Tyne

Philip Blond, Director of Respublica, felt there is a danger that devolution could die for want of a big idea:

What we have is partial. It is death by increments and will end in stasis. We need big bold ideas that will sustain momentum. Health, taxation, welfare, are the big apparent 'non-devolvables' that should be devolved.

Specifically, the big piece of the jigsaw missing is skills - GM needs full control of all post 16 technical education. That the government saw the need for local industrial strategies meant they recognise importance of local skills competence but we lack the powers and funding. Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

PART I:

We heard repeatedly that the sums of money that should be devolved should be more substantial and that there was a need for more certainty of funding, more '*long termism*' and the end of the '*guess-bid-wait*' model which often set devolved area against devolved area. In addition, a long term, sustainable and sufficient settlement for Local Government was suggested as a necessary complement to further devolution of funds to Metro Mayors. Finally, there were numerous calls for fiscal devolution - the ability to raise one's own funding.

Financial certainty. Business needs certainty and so does local government. We're trying to put plans in place that will take 10-15 years. Have relationship with Government that's like bingo, the numbers might come up, they might not. One of best things Government could do, even before devolution, is to give us financial certainty. Give us bankable partnerships. We're both in government and we need to go on the journey together. **Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees**

Sir John Armitt, Chair of the NIC, proposed one solution:

NIC recommended £43bn committed to infrastructure over 20 years and that it should be allocated to areas including existing city regions on a rolling five year programme so have some long term certainty of funding like Network Rail - with discretion to spend as wish up to £500 million.

The idea that all relevant infrastructure funding should be pooled and devolved was also supported by many.

PART II: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR DEVOLUTION

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

1 Lessons from Devo 1.0

Question: In your opinion what are the lessons from Devo 1.0 (the devolution to English regions including to Regional Assemblies - later Leaders Board - and RDAs in the 2000s)?

Regional Assemblies: Regional Assemblies were seen by some as remote and another layer of bureaucracy - and cost. They were also seen as part of a *'half-hearted'* Government policy. One said bluntly *'there was very little devolution in Devo 1.0'*. **Nick Raynsford, Deputy Chairman of Crossrail** commented on the fact that had the regional referendum taken place at the same time as one for London Mayor (in other words, in 1999 not 2004) history would be different and the devolution agenda would now be much further forward.

The key lesson is that these were effectively add-ons to the democratic process as opposed to the real objective which was the devolution of power to democratically elected leaders. Result therefore was a continuing battle between various organisations. **Lord Heseltine**

That structural solutions that attempt to neatly divide up England and take a blanket approach do not always meet the needs of different areas, and are limited from the start by the nature of their structures, which are then difficult to evolve. **Anonymous contributor**

A number of commentators made more general points, for example, one said that because the policy was made in Westminster and Whitehall it replicated many of their problems:

The choice of huge regions with no geographical evidence base was poor. So was the idea that RDAs could function as part of the DTI's empire and Regional Planning bodies as part of ODPM's empire. **Richard Blyth, Head of Policy at the RTPi**

PART II:

Others pointed out *'there was no involvement in the plans so no ownership. You cannot take for granted a regional identity.'*

However, a number of commentators lamented that the real value of these institutions - especially the RDAs in the North - was never properly evaluated because they were swept aside after the General Election of 2010.

The weakness of government regions and related infrastructure was their temporary nature, a creature of government, with not enough independence or autonomy from Whitehall. **Henri Murison, Director, NPP**

Others saw clear lessons to be learnt: that devolution needs to be linked to a real place and sense of identity (*'not a point on a compass'*); that one size never fits all; and that devolution should be done properly.

RDAs: There were some positive, but more negative, comments made. It was pointed out that they had significant funding, far more than currently available to Metro Mayors, and that this was put into a *'single pot'* allowing regional discretion regards priorities and spending. It was also pointed out that what did work relatively well was *'their ability to respond to economic shocks'*.

A number of respondents said the money was not always well used, for example being *'spread too thinly'*, whilst others criticised the lack of democratic control - although the engagement of stakeholders was deemed positive by some.

Devolution of significant power and resources to a more local level can make a significant difference to the economy and to people's lives. However, without a local democratic mandate these structures are vulnerable to changing Governments and policies nationally and can be criticised locally for being 'remote' and undemocratic.
Anonymous contributor

Regional Development Agencies' governance structures allowed for more diversity of voices, valued equally, sharing expertise, through social partnership. This structure is not formally built into the current structures of devolution. **Kathryn Mackridge, Policy Officer at the TUC**

To work, devolution needs democratically elected individuals to be accountable. Boards, LEPs, RDAs, are too obscure and arcane. The public have a right to know who's in charge, and to choose that person based on policies clearly stated in a manifesto. No more top-down "we know best". **Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of the North of Tyne**

Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, also noted that there questions around *'accountability'* to both local business communities and to the wider electorate:

If you don't have clear lines of accountability, both to local communities and to business, then you're an easy scapegoat. Someone can always say it's 'us vs them' - which is a guaranteed route to eventual institutional upheaval and continued instability in economic development policy.

2 Lessons from devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

For most devolution to the nation state level has been a success. Many were *'delighted'* with the results and the sense of ownership these institutions now had - no-one, for example, called for the ending of devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Other positive comments included the observation that *'the genuine devolution of political and fiscal power has had a noticeable impact on a national sense of identity and a sense of ownership of the democratic institutions'*. In that respect, this wave of devolution further proved the importance of doing devolution *'properly'*.

The Scottish and Welsh devolved Governments have in many cases instituted novel policy innovation and have more explicitly elaborated policies on how to tackle inequality and generate inclusive growth. **Sasha Morgan, Head of Secretariat for Social Mobility Commission**

The main lesson is that concerns about fiscal devolution have been unfounded. **Mayor of London's Office**

There is a lot that can be learned from Wales. Notably, the statutory underpinning of social partnership working, strengthened by the proposed Social Partnership Bill which seeks to ensure more social partnership arrangements between government, public and private sector employers and trade unions in Wales. The Fair Work Convention in Scotland encourages a similar focus on driving up standards of work and ensuring greater equality at work. Trade unions jointly chair the Fair Work Convention and are represented in the membership. **Kathryn Mackridge, Policy Officer at the TUC**

Expect there to be glitches and don't plan for the perfect. The Welsh Assembly got pilloried in its first few years. But its gone from strength to strength and although Wales still has some massive problems Cardiff acts and feels like a capital city. **Jane Thomas, former Director of the Campaign for English Regions**

There were positive comments about the results of devolution especially in Scotland and Wales.

The Scottish and Welsh devolved Governments have in many cases instituted novel policy innovation and have more explicitly elaborated policies on how to tackle inequality and generate inclusive growth. **Sasha Morgan, Head of Secretariat for Social Mobility Commission**

There were three negative comments. First, devolution at the national level can encourage nationalism. Second, that devolution can stop at the nation state level - and actually limit resources and powers going to the city region level. Third, and finally, there is some risk of *'clientism'* being exercised within devolved institutions.

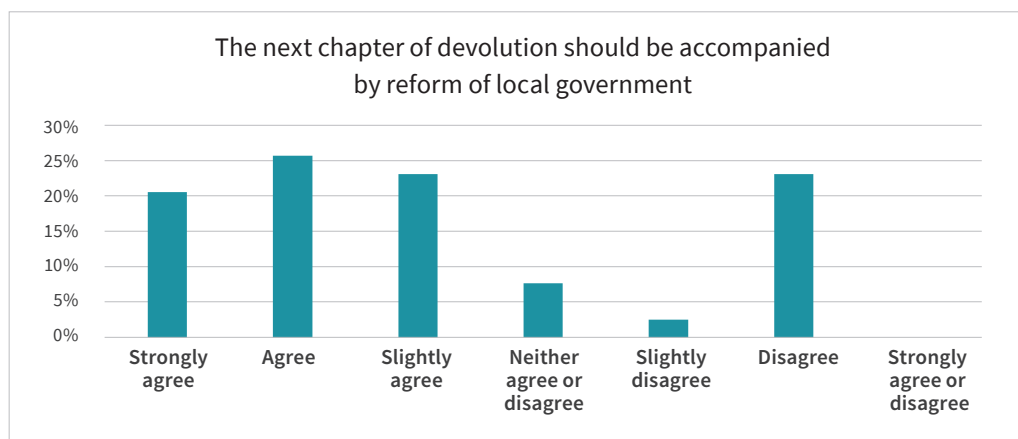
PART II:

As one **anonymous contributor** said, the chief lesson is that :

'Devolution to a nation is not the same as devolution to a place and its people, and that the devolved nations potentially end up being more centralised than the UK state, hampering productivity in a similar way. There can however be a positive correlation between identity, autonomy and devolved power, which can in some circumstances foster a sense of shared endeavour and creative response to challenge.'

Three more insights were provided. First, that devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - and indeed London - was delivered in response to people's demands, for example the Constitutional Convention in Scotland, and not imposed from the top. Second, that for some the logical outcome of this first wave of devolution could be a model of a federal UK. Third, devolution is a journey not a destination.

3 Views on the future of devolution



27 respondents, 64%, agreed with the statement and 10, 24%, disagreed (although none strongly disagreed).

Of the respondents who agreed, many suggested that the existing two-tier model of governance - of counties and districts - was overly complex when a Metro Mayoral level was added. **Akash Paun, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Government** noted that: *‘in two tier areas it’s a bit more problematic and harder to make the case for another tier.’*

Some respondents suggested moving towards a system of unitary authorities. **Phillip Blond, Director of Respublica**, put this most clearly, advocating *‘unitarization across the board with one level of local government in all areas.’*

Whilst there was no clear consensus, that the next stage of devolution could or should be intrinsically linked with local government reform, it was clear that more devolution provided a good opportunity to consider such reform. Those who disagreed made clear that they weren’t opposed to reform of local government in principle, they simply didn’t think it should be block on the next stage of devolution.

Sir John Armitt, Chair of the NIC, who disagreed, was clearest:

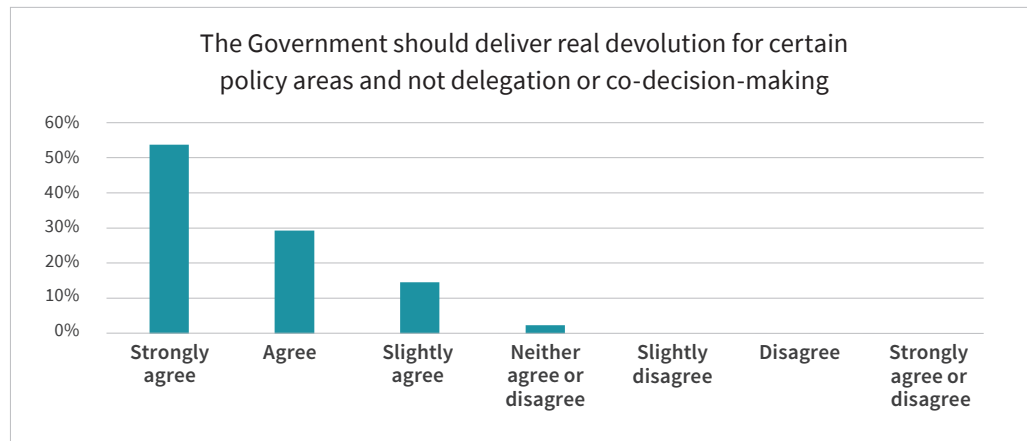
this should not be a condition [for further devolution], it could be a massive diversion of time and resources.

Another **Anonymous respondent** who disagreed made a similar point, *‘devolve now and then do things later, i.e. not conditional.’*

Duncan Bowie, Senior Research Associate, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, stated his concern regards any further reform including devolution without a central overarching framework in place:

a regional planning framework must be set within the context of a national spatial plan, a national regional economic strategy, and a national infrastructure strategy which has a spatial dimension... without such national frameworks, further devolution would be a very serious mistake.

PART II:



40 respondents, 90% agreed with this statement. No respondents disagreed with this statement, one neither agreed or disagreed and one did not answer. Overall the Metro Mayors were even more positive than the average in pushing for further powers (7 respondents, 100%).

Those who strongly agreed suggested that not much power had actually been given up by the centre. **The London Mayor's Office** strongly agreed, stating that *'where possible, delegation should be avoided.'*

Andy Burnham *'slightly agreed'*, insisting that working in partnership with central Government was working in Manchester for now.

Priority policy areas for devolution:

The key policy areas respondents felt the Government should commit to included:

Transport (25 respondents, 60%)

Many chose not to expand simply stating *'transport'*, however **Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of North of Tyne** was specific in the asks in this area, stating that the priority policy areas should be *'transport planning and regulation, management of public transport, and road traffic enforcement.'*

Education and skills (21 respondents, 50%)

Again most chose not to expand with transport and education and skills often mentioned together. **Mike Hawking, Joseph Rowntree Foundation**, emphasised both alongside economic development as *'policymaking that affects labour markets.'*

Housing (15 respondents, 36%)

Housing was a priority though few expanded further on their reasons for choosing this as a priority.

Health and social care (14 respondents, 33%)

A smaller number of respondents mentioned health and social care, with some recognising the difficulties involved in a complex devolution of this power.

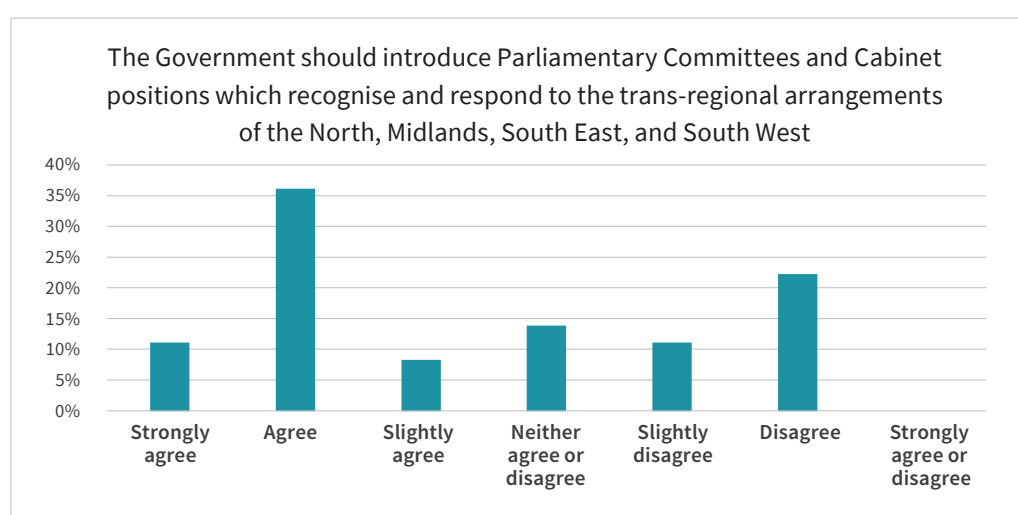
health and social care is more problematic, but the point is that there should be flexibility from Government so Local Authorities and Combined Authorities can have power to deliver where they are competent and have confidence. **Anonymous contributor**

Phillip Blond, Director of Respublica, in an answer to a previous question, suggested that the NHS should devolve much of its power to local authorities: *'they are the institutions for health of the 21st century, not the NHS.'*

Others made a distinction between health-care which should be provided at a local level and that which should be provided at a national level. An **anonymous respondent** working in local government suggested that ‘*community health*’ should be a priority area for devolution ‘*as opposed to acute.*’

An **anonymous contributor** suggested a different answer to the question regards priority areas stating that

places across the country will have different priorities and should be able to make progress on issues that are of most concern to them locally.



This question generated a great diversity of views. 20 respondents of the 37 who answered this question (54%) agreed overall and 12 respondents (32%) disagreed. Five respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (14%) and five didn't answer this question.

Most of those who agreed chose not to expand on their answer, however, **Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of the North of Tyne**, stated that he slightly agreed but felt that Ministers should not ‘*manage or oversee devolved authorities*’ and should instead ‘*help devolution and work with other departments*’, suggesting a facilitator role working within Cabinet.

Henri Murison, Director, NPP, said ‘*Agree. Transitional measure until full devolution secured.*’

Of those who disagreed, there were various reasons given for doing so. Some noted that these geographies were ‘*less of a priority than city regions and counties*’, though didn't offer resistance to the idea of Committees and Cabinet positions per se.

Others were critical of the idea of Ministerial positions for regional geographies:

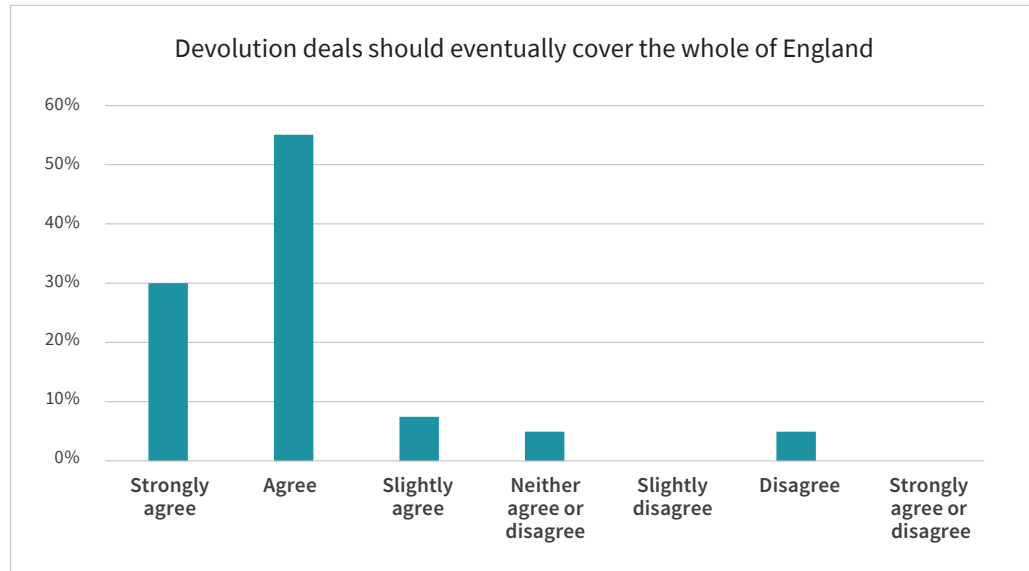
cross-cutting Ministerial positions don't seem to have the purchase on the system in my experience, for example the Northern Powerhouse Minister seems for show.

Anonymous contributor

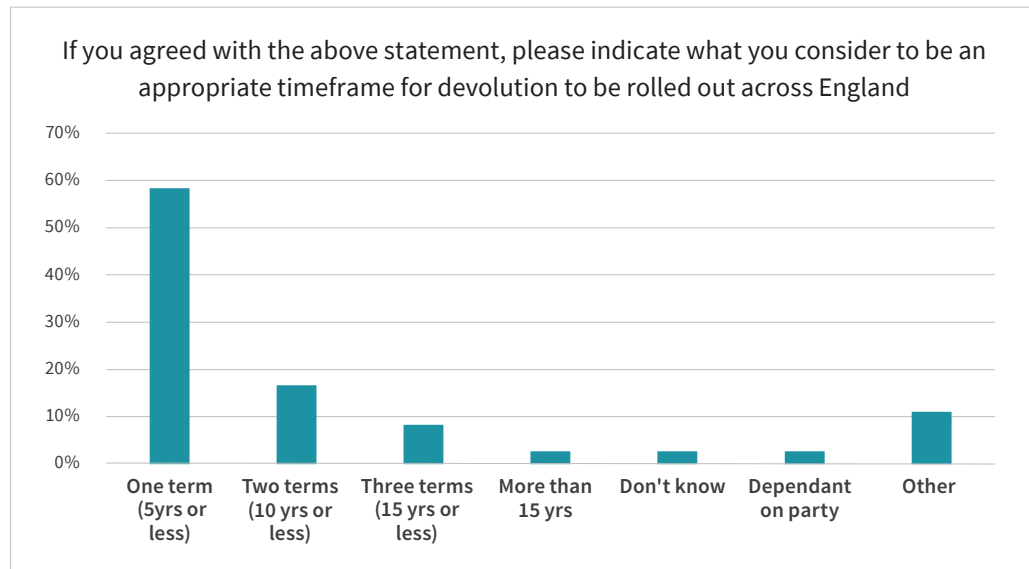
Akash Paun, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Government also had misgivings and thought that:

Ministers for the North, etc, will feel like they have responsibility for setting strategy rather than the elected Metro Mayors... I fear that may run counter to what is trying to be achieved.

PART II:



34 respondents agreed or strongly agreed (81%). Respondents who agreed with the above statement, indicated what they considered to be an appropriate timeframe for devolution to be rolled out across England:



By far the most popular option in this section was *'one term'* (21 respondents), as in a single Government term of five years or less. 6 respondents chose two terms, 3 respondents chose three terms, with the rest chosen by one person each.

A minority of those who suggested *'one term'* stated that this should happen as soon as possible, or similar. **Lord Heseltine**, for example, suggested *'yesterday'* to emphasise the urgency of the task.

Among the four respondents grouped under *'other'*, one had neither agreed nor disagreed with the question and **Lucy Powell, MP for Manchester Central** had answered generally, suggesting there should be a *'ladder'* of devolution which local areas could go up as they acquired more powers.

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol and an **anonymous contributor** agreed saying that the timeline for devolution to be rolled out should depend on the region and the city and how prepared they are to acquire new powers.

An **anonymous contributor** suggested that instead of prioritising geographies, the Government should prioritise devolution of specific policy areas saying:

where the model... already exists (for example bus franchising), devolution should be "rolled out quickly" but where the devolution is more complex, or involves "a wider system" (for example skills and employment support) it might need to happen in stages.

4 The future purpose of devolution in England

A range of responses were provided but the majority (26 respondents) referenced either/or both an economic and a democratic rationale. There were two other key purposes of devolution put forward by respondents: better services and an end to dominance by Westminster and Whitehall.

Improved Economic Performance (18 respondents, 43%).

Lord Wrigglesworth said the purpose of devolution is to stimulate greater growth and opportunities. **Lord O'Neill** said he saw devolution primarily in terms of economics, especially productivity because *'lifting more of the parts of the economy would lift the whole'*.

For many the goal of devolution is enhanced economic performance with rebalancing the UK economy mentioned most (13 respondents, 31%); for others, it was about the potential to reduce entrenched poverty and persistent inequality.

7 of the 10 most disadvantaged regions in the EU are in the UK - because we are centralised. People do quite rightly feel left behind and without a voice. **Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe, Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

The purpose should be to ensure equal flourishing, by recognising that different regions will have to do different things and ensuring that by so doing you don't suffer: to minimise the place based penalty. **Philip Blond, Director of Respublica**

However, a number of respondents pointed out that without a genuine commitment from the centre and the *'letting go'* of significant resources, including tax raising powers, and policy levers this goal may be a chimera.

The concept that further devolution from central government will inevitably reduce spatial inequalities and somehow lead to a positive rebalancing of the UK economy has no substantive basis. **Duncan Bowie, Senior Research Associate, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL**

Most respondents were however positive seeing devolution as an opportunity to improve outcomes in the following areas:

- Closing the regional productivity gap within and between regions so that every place can achieve its full economic potential
- Productivity, skills and labour market strength
- Local economic resilience, recovery and adaptability
- UK's urban balance of trade and foreign direct investment (FDI)
- Climate, air quality and green energy

- Inclusive growth, health, employment, life and healthy life expectancy (and reducing the negatives of these, e.g. inequality, deprivation, worklessness, etc.)
- Reducing the need for some high-dependency services over time
- Democratic renewal and engagement
- Increased cohesion through local participation and autonomy at the level of *'place'* rather than *'nation'*

Dan Jarvis, Mayor of Sheffield City Region, highlighted another key post-Brexit issue:

There should be a national steer of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) aligned with local areas being allowed to determine local priorities. The Sheffield City Region would want the flexibility to invest the UKSPF in supporting the locally agreed priorities in the Strategic Economic Plan, emerging Local Industrial Strategy and Mayoral Manifesto.

Better, More Democratic Government (15 respondents, 36%).

The notion that the purpose of devolution is better Government or Government fit for the 21st century was prevalent. Devolution equals more engagement, more democratic *'ownership'* of Government, improved accountability, and more resilient communities.

To create a strong and purposeful identity so there is a stronger sense of place; so that people can influence and set priorities; and can hold elected people to account.

Edna Robinson, Chair of the People's Powerhouse

Good government: ensuring that in all parts of the country people have an opportunity to influence the things that matter to them.

Nick Raynsford, Deputy Chairman of Crossrail

Devolution should be seen as the key catalyst to reforming the state so it is fit for the 21st century. **Anonymous contributor**

Brexit was also referenced as adding an important purpose to devolution:

Devolution should be part of any future Government's response to the EU Referendum result - improving democratic and public engagement by moving decision making 'closer to home' and giving citizens confidence that funding is being directed towards causes and investments which will improve local economies, productivity and life chances. Inherent in this should be a drive to rebalance public (and eventually private) investment across the UK. **Anonymous contributor**

PART II:

Other purposes of devolution: There was a strong sense that devolution could help deliver better public services (12 respondents, 29%) - better because *'better tailored to place and circumstance'* and because they allow more joined up policy making - and more engagement. These notions were predicated on the view that policies *'made in Westminster and Whitehall'* were not fit for purpose and that *'voices'* are neglected/overlooked due to the dominance of London.

The Mayor of London's Office put it this way:

The purpose of devolution in England is to achieve multiple improvements in how this country is governed - including greater accountability, efficiency, attentiveness to local needs, better prioritised expenditure, fewer public service 'silos', more integrated services (such as health and social care), more integrated transport services across and between regions, greater incentives and financial powers to support housing, commercial, logistical and industrial developments, greater investment in and more coordinated delivery of infrastructure (including social infrastructure) in cities and other local areas, stronger environmental regulations and improvements in the environment to support public health and greater biodiversity.

Lord Heseltine put the purpose of devolution somewhat differently:

Release the energies of local communities and people. Local talent, local ideas, local resources, in a way that adds up the vibrancy of identifiable economies and communities.

Kathryn Mackridge, Policy Officer at the TUC, said:

The purpose of devolution in England should be to support a more prosperous and equal country. Every person should have a good job, access to world class public services and a stake in their local community no matter where they were born, live or work. Devolution, if properly resourced and delivered based on need with strong democratic participation from a diversity of stakeholders can help to close the inequalities between regions and within regions.

5 What better devolution looks like

The majority of respondents (22 respondents, 52%) described devolution as a principle and a process not a blueprint or ‘event’: it is a journey that national Government must embark on in partnership with local government and the public. 12 respondents (29%) put forward a distinct plan or specific proposal. 8 respondents (8, 19%) answered the question in a different way: by stating what they saw as the outcome of devolution.

Devolution is a process not a blueprint or an event (22 respondents, 52%)

Respondents referenced that the spirit of devolution means there cannot be one model designed behind closed doors in Westminster and Whitehall and then imposed from above. There were some critical comments regarding the fact that we have had devolution through secret deals or diktat or even that the Government have adopted a ‘*used car salesman*’ approach.

Many emphasised that there needs to be a ‘*bottom up*’ approach and that not ‘*one size fits all*’.

Devolution should be something that the Government is fully committed to but is designed in partnership with the local level through proper dialogue. It must have at its heart a genuine willingness to give up powers. **Arianna Giovannini, Interim Director of IPPR North**

Devolution should be locally led; not constrained by a single governance model; championed by Ministers across the whole of Whitehall and underpinned by a sustainable financial settlement for local government.
Anonymous contributor

The key thing is it’s not devolution for devolution’s sake. But there’s something lost with the cumbersome, one size fits all, nature of national government. Where it’s appropriate let’s move away from that. However national Government will still be needed, for example to control standards for airlines and heart surgery. **Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees**

Others pointed out that proper devolution would ‘*allow Parliament to focus on genuinely national issues.*’ Another said, ‘*without devolution it will be hard for national politicians to deliver on their promises.*’

We need specific devolution plans (12 respondents, 29%)

There were a range of proposals and suggestions from the need for a federal UK to the absolute necessity for future devolved structures to have some independent control of finances - fiscal devolution. One respondent stated that any discussion regarding future devolution can only be meaningful if it includes a real debate about the reform of taxation.

A number of respondents said that devolution was a real opportunity to address deprived areas and entrenched inequality.

PART II:

Others took the view that better devolution was *'the end of the piecemeal approach'*. Another said that it required action at all the various layers of local to national Government.

Lord Foulkes was one of three to reference that for them better devolution includes moving towards a federal structure (although other respondents were not so specific).

There should be a federal structure with six large English regions - North, Midlands, west, east, south east and London plus nations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - this would counter movement towards independence in Scotland and pave the way to reform of the House of Lords, which should become a Senate of the Nations and Regions.

Lord Foulkes

Keeping taxes locally is key. That would mean the power to deliver without having to go back to the Treasury or DfT. If government is serious about devolution then they've got to loosen the chains. **James Palmer, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

Sir Howard Bernstein referenced what he sees as *'the hierarchies for change'*:

- *at local neighbourhood level the need to equip local authorities to create stronger commissioning arrangements to join up local services to support residents;*
- *at economic geography level the need for Mayors to address skills, housing, transport, spatial planning etc*
- *at pan regional level the need to address wider transport and sectoral economic matters through greater collaboration with other sub regions where there is alignment of priorities and objectives eg the north of England.*

Devolution based on outcomes (8 respondents, 19%)

The vast majority of those who answered the question by stating what they saw as the **outcome** of devolution, said simply: *'better lives for our residents.'* Others said the result would be *'better, more tailored services and better outcomes for people on the issues that matter to them.'* Another said: *'strong regional identity coupled with economic prosperity and political accountability.'* One said better devolution would *'limit inter and intra-regional competition for resources particularly in regions with competing combined authorities.'*

Better devolution means prosperous regions with strong governance - including strong turnout at elections - and self-sustaining economies. **Mark Goldstone, Director of West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce**

It's always about the people. Politics should always ask: is devolution going to be better for the general public than a centralised system? The people will be more prosperous across the country if they have devolved power. They'll be healthier, live longer, be in jobs, own their own homes. All of these things are intrinsically linked. Without devolution, we won't see the dramatic improvements in long term deprivation. **James Palmer, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

Giving areas what they want. Truly buying into the 'bottom up' dynamic and not the system in which Westminster and Whitehall say what areas should need. Better devolution means places having enough power to decide major decisions including, for example, arrangements for infrastructure. It is also a different country, one where trust is shared and London gives up its belief that it has a monopoly of wisdom. **Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester**

TEN PRINCIPLES FOR DEVO 3.0

The following consensus conclusions emerge as potential principles that should inform the next wave of devolution:

- Devolution must be a top five priority for the Government which should be **clear about the purposes of devolution**: supporting a new Treasury objective of rebalancing the economy geographically; creating more democratic governance; and the better delivery of public services.

- The Government needs to have **a coherent and systematic approach** to devolution - the goal should be to agree devolution deals across the whole of England in the next five years.

- The Government should commit to a **national dialogue** on the benefits of, and need for, devolution as well as a programme of **focused dialogue** with sub regional partners.

- In the short term, there is a need for **a settlement with existing elected Mayors** focused on the devolution of all adult skills funding and powers; NIC's recommendation on devolving transport and other infrastructure spending; and some elements of fiscal devolution.

- In the medium term, the Government must set out **a clear devolution framework**, or continuum, showing the range of current Government powers and funding suitable for devolving and which can be accessed as capacity and competence, as well as leadership and demand, becomes available at the devolved level.

- The Government should publicly acknowledge that devolution is a process as well as a principle: something that can, and will, only be delivered in **partnership** with existing elected Mayors and local government as well as business and other stakeholders.

- The next wave of devolution in England should *not* be conditional on local government reform but ultimately **what is needed is triple devolution**: to local government; to the sub-regional (Mayoral) level; and to the sub-national level - the North, the Midlands, London and the wider South East.

EMERGING CONCLUSIONS:

- The next wave of devolution must not be *'half hearted'* or *'one size fits all'*. Devo 3.0 needs to signify **the end of imposed blueprints** and shift the emphasis towards local and sub-regional partners taking the lead in agreeing deals. The Metro Mayoral model should not be the only model permitted.
-
- A number of important issues need to be better understood and addressed: the **diversity deficit**, especially regards gender; and **the arrangements for scrutiny** of devolved structures at the sub-regional or city region, as well as Westminster and Whitehall, levels.
-
- A Secretary of State should be appointed to lead the **implementation** of devolution. All Government Departments - including HMT and relevant quangos - need to be genuinely committed to the principle, and support the process, of devolution and rebalancing the economy.

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DEVOCONNECT

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