



The Devolution

All-Party Parliamentary Group

The Devolution APPG has launched an **open call for evidence** for our inquiry into the role that central government has in making a success of devolution in England. The deadline for written submissions is **Friday 8 January 2021**. We welcome submissions from any interested stakeholders.

Please send your submissions with the subject line: 'Devolution APPG - Inquiry Submission', to devolutionappg@connectpa.co.uk.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The APPG's call for evidence will look at what steps need to be taken within Whitehall to fully realise the potential of local devolution to drive growth and improve outcomes for people and places across England.

Please use the following questions to structure your submission to the inquiry. You may answer as many or as few as you would like in your response.

Existing barriers to devolution

- What barriers currently exist in central government that limit the scope and scale of local devolution and place-based leadership?
- Has a focus on establishing new governance arrangements as a precursor to devolution unnecessarily slowed the pace of devolution?
- Understanding the Whitehall perspective – are there areas where devolving power and responsibility would make delivering national policy harder? Are there areas Whitehall believes it should be devolving more promptly?
- What changes would enable better working between local and central government in their approach to devolution?
- What could be improved in different government departments' approach to devolution?
- Are there changes that would enable government departments to take a more consolidated approach to devolution?
- What barriers exist at national government level to the delivery of housing?
- What lessons can be learned about devolution from abroad?
- How can government ensure local and combined authorities have the capacity and skills to take on new responsibilities?



Lessons learned from English devolution

- What lessons can be learnt from the negotiation of previous devolution deals and how they have worked in practice?
- What case studies of central government best practice, and of bad practice, exist?
- To what extent is there effective accountability in England's devolved areas?
- To what extent do combined authorities need greater control over devolved policy areas, such as skills or housing, to ensure they have enough responsibility to be held accountable for the economic performance of their areas?
- What lessons can be learnt from previous initiatives on adult education and skills budgets, and community budgets?
- Has government struck the right balance between bespoke deals and a standardised devolution baseline, do things need to change for future deals?
- Is the focus on devolving powers related to growth and infrastructure, rather than, social services such as welfare and health still appropriate?
- Which department is best placed to lead the process of greater devolution?

Looking forward – central government reform

- What reforms are necessary to increase the scope and scale of devolution in England?
- Should the powers of the existing mayoral combined authorities be enhanced? What would this look like?
- How can we ensure that devolution delivers better outcomes for all communities?
- How can arrangements be enhanced so that combined authorities can take responsibility for economic outcomes in their region?
- To what extent is improved control over funding and fiscal decentralisation key to the success of devolution?
- How can devolution be secured for those parts of England that have so far been left out of this agenda?
- Should local authorities be given more powers to support infrastructure delivery?
- As part of the Project Speed initiative, how can Whitehall enable local government to deliver infrastructure projects such as schools, housing and hospitals at pace?
- What could be done to improve the way central government departments co-ordinate and develop place-specific policy interventions?
- Should local government have a more formal role in the development of national policy?
- What has the response to COVID-19 from Whitehall taught us about devolution?