

Part 1.1 - Overview of the North East Combined Authority

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the constitution of the North East Combined Authority (referred to in the constitution as “the Authority” or “NECA”).
- 1.2 A combined authority is a legal body set up under national legislation which enables a group of councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.
- 1.3 The North East Combined Authority was created on 7 May 2024 by a legal order¹ made by the Secretary of State following a period of public consultation. The area of the Authority includes the areas of the councils of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. Those seven councils are the “constituent councils” of NECA and their combined area is referred to as the “Combined Area” or the “North East Area”. It should also be noted that the order states that the formal legal name of the Authority is the North East Mayoral Combined Authority, but the Authority is to be referred to as the North East Combined Authority or NECA for all practical purposes.

2. The Devolution Deal

- 2.1 NECA was established to give effect to a “minded to” devolution deal which was agreed between the government and the seven councils in December 2022. That deal was confirmed when the legal order mentioned above was made.
- 2.2 The devolution deal provides the area with new powers and funding to increase opportunities and living standards through inclusive growth and productivity improvements.
- 2.3 The deal includes:
 - 2.3.1 the election of a North East mayor to provide overall vision and leadership, be directly accountable to the electorate and to receive new powers on transport, housing and skills;
 - 2.3.2 control of an investment fund over 30 years to be invested by the North East to drive growth and take forward its priorities over the longer term;
 - 2.3.3 new powers to improve and better integrate local transport, including the ability to introduce bus franchising and control of a key route network;
 - 2.3.4 a city region sustainable transport settlement;
 - 2.3.5 new powers to better shape local skills provisions to ensure these meet the needs of the local economy. This will include devolution of adult education functions and the core adult education budget, as well as input into the new local skills improvement plans;
 - 2.3.6 planning and delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) from 2025/26;
 - 2.3.7 the integration of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership into the Authority will ensure there continues to be a strong and independent local business voice which informs local decision making and strategic economic planning;
 - 2.3.8 a commitment to explore a local partnership with Great British Railways Transition Team so that the Authority can help shape and improve the local rail offer;

¹ The North East Mayoral Combined Authority (Establishment and Functions) Order 2024

- 2.3.9 new powers to drive the regeneration of the area and to build more affordable, more beautiful homes, including compulsory purchase powers and the ability to establish mayoral development corporations;
- 2.3.10 additional funding for building new homes on brownfield land;
- 2.3.11 capital funding to drive place-based economic regeneration; and
- 2.3.12 a commitment to developing, in partnership with the Government, an arrangement which ensures close cooperation with the North East's Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), and a key leadership role for the mayor in local resilience and civil contingency planning, preparation and delivery.