

PIVOTĀL



EMPOWERING BELFAST

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE OF DEVOLVED DECISION MAKING IN UK CITIES

THE VOICE FOR BUSINESS
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FOREWORD

As the voice of business in Belfast, Belfast Chamber's aim is a simple one – to see our city grow economically for the benefit of all of our people and for the city to become an even better place to live, work, visit and invest in.

Some might, therefore, think it peculiar for a business organisation to commission a piece of research focused on the devolution of powers to local government. But as we saw quite clearly at our BelFastForward conference in early 2020 when we focused on the examples of New York and Vienna, the role of city governments in engendering economic growth and social change is absolutely key.

Over the course of the last decade, we have witnessed cities across the UK – our competitors for talent and investment – becoming increasingly empowered. The surge in the growth of places like Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham may not be entirely down to their new governance structures but it is surely not a complete coincidence either.

Belfast Chamber believes that our city's best days lie ahead of us and that we still possess so much unfulfilled potential. Whilst we are hugely impressed with the transformation our city has experienced – much of which has been delivered through the courage and hard work of our members – we are, at times, frustrated by the pace of change and a growing sense that we are falling behind rival cities.

Cities everywhere have been massively affected by the crisis created by the coronavirus pandemic. Places like Milan, the European epicentre of the virus, Paris, San Francisco and others have delivered big, bold plans to reimagine and rethink their cities. Progress in Belfast has been much slower. Painfully so at times. The difference between Belfast and those other cities isn't a lack of ambition or vision. It's a lack of power. Putting that ambition, that vision, into a vehicle that is able to deliver the kind of change our city needs now, and in the years to come, will be crucial in whether we can overcome the challenges that lie ahead or whether they will overwhelm us.

In his book 'The Nation City', Rahm Emanuel argues that it is the world's cities are the real crucible of innovation when it comes to public policy. Whether it's transport, the environment or the economy, the former Mayor of Chicago suggests that cities can be more "immediate, intimate and impactful". That's



what Belfast needs. If Belfast is to become the best city that it can be, then we need to replace our splintered system of government with better, more empowered structures that can knit together the enablers of growth like regeneration and infrastructure.

This report, produced by local think tank Pivotal, excellently highlights the range of devolution models that now exist elsewhere in the UK. Each example illustrates how cities are taking increasing levels of responsibility for shaping their own destinies and are starting to reap the rewards.

Belfast Chamber's hope is that this report helps spark a debate about the future governance of our city. The precise model that we choose to deploy is something we can debate and discuss, but one thing is becoming increasingly clear. If we are serious about making our shared vision for the city a reality as well as ensuring that Belfast's growth is sustainable and inclusive and that we are ready to deal with challenges like climate change, then we need to empower Belfast.

Belfast Chamber wishes to thank Belfast City Council, the Department for Communities, the Northern Ireland Local Government Association, Glasgow City Council and Liverpool City Region Combined Metropolitan Authority for their invaluable engagement during the production of this report and also to the team at Pivotal for their energy and effort without which this report would not have been possible.

SIMON HAMILTON | CHIEF EXECUTIVE

OVERVIEW

This report provides an overview of the models of devolved decision-making within local councils in the United Kingdom (UK) to provide a context to discuss the role, if any, of enhanced decision-making powers in Belfast. It was commissioned by Belfast Chamber from Northern Ireland's independent think tank Pivotal.

This report will refer to devolution in the context of powers from government to local authorities rather than devolved powers from the UK Government to the Northern Ireland Executive. Devolution to local councils intends to de-centralise decision-making powers in areas such as planning, transport and economic development. De-centralised decision-making may rebalance inequalities and act as a catalyst for innovation and productivity growth.

The report explores evidence on the role of devolved decision-making through case studies of local authorities who have achieved additional powers through a range of devolved governance models (including combined authorities [CA], freeports and city deals) before considering the implications of enhanced powers for local councils in the greater Belfast area. Devolved decision-making can cover a breadth of areas from fiscal powers to setting the agenda for adult education reform. This report will focus on the role of devolved economic powers related to regeneration, infrastructure development and business growth.

This paper aims to inform a discussion about different models of devolution and how they might apply to Belfast. There are questions for further discussion included at the end of the paper.

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CURRENT POWERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN UK

Models and associated decision-making powers in local councils vary across the UK with a trend of increasing devolution during the past 10-15 years. Local government in England has experienced three major reforms in the past decade alone, but there have been limited changes in Northern Ireland where councils have a more restricted range of powers than UK counterparts.

The following section will explore current decision-making powers in Northern Ireland and England before outlining the combined authority model.



NORTHERN IRELAND

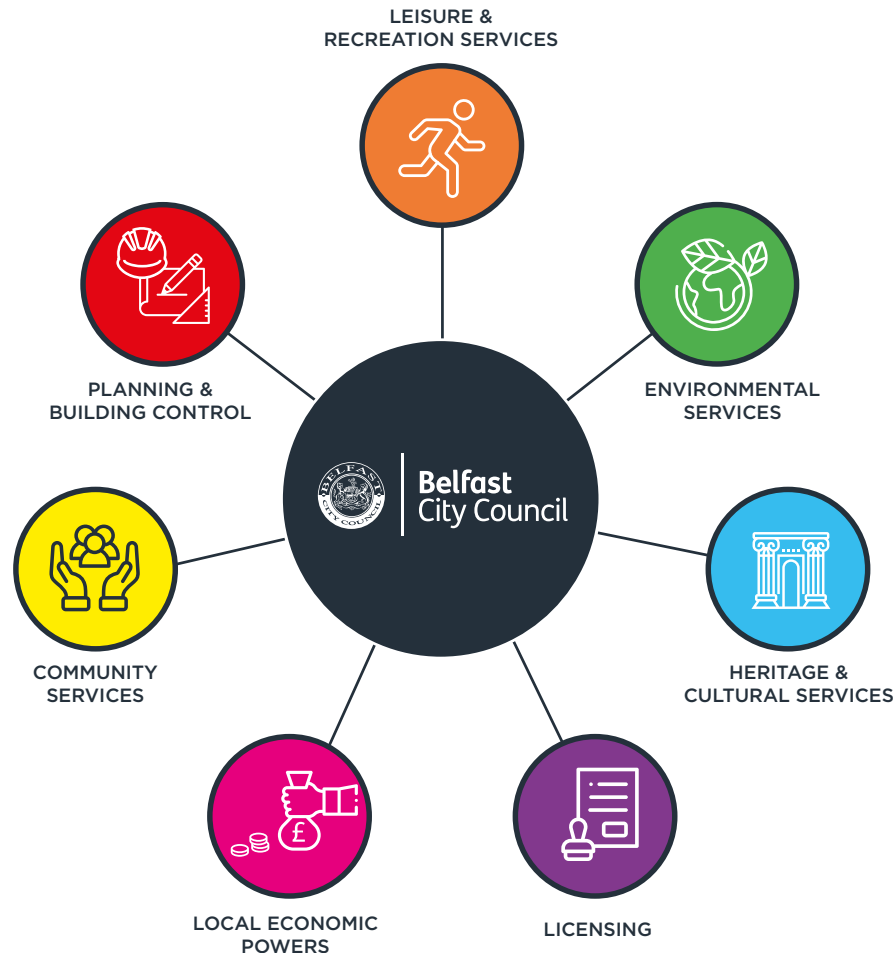


Figure 1

Belfast City Council (BCC) consists of elected councillors who elect a Lord Mayor with responsibility for chairing meetings and acting as a figure head for BCC. This role has limited decision-making authority and is principally a civic duty.

Local councils are governed through a committee model with a chief executive to manage council services. Proposals begin within a committee and must pass through the strategic policy and resource committee before being approved by the full council. BCC’s economic powers are the responsibility of the City Growth and Regeneration Committee, whose powers encompass enterprise schemes such as the ‘investing in women’ initiative. Tourism powers include developing small-scale accommodation, providing business support and advising developers on place-related issues. However, broader economic powers are managed by the Department for the Economy (DfE) whilst roads and transport are controlled by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Regeneration powers are held by the Department for Communities (DfC); these were due to be extended to local councils in 2016 but this did not take place due to disagreements about draft legislation and a lack of ministerial support.

Local revenues raised from rates are split between the Executive and the Council. Income from rates contributes over 70% of the total local government revenue in Northern Ireland. Councils in Northern Ireland receive a much smaller proportion of revenues from government grants compared to England, Scotland and Wales and have a smaller range of responsibilities.

The recent launch of the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) provides much needed additional investment and long-term strategy in Northern Ireland to accelerate inclusive economic growth. City deals are part of the localism agenda introduced by UK government in 2011 to enable cities and local partners to address gaps in local needs and be innovative with new programmes. Governance arrangements vary depending on the individual city deal and do not necessarily lead to devolved decision-making powers.

The Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) focuses on regeneration, infrastructure, innovation and employability. This is funded by the UK Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and partner organisations. Partners include Northern Ireland’s higher and further education institutions plus six member councils encompassing most of the Antrim and Down counties. Whilst the BRCD brings together strategic partnerships to implement innovative projects in seven targeted growth sectors, the decision-making related to infrastructure, tourism and regeneration continues to be managed by the Northern Ireland Executive.

ENGLAND

Figure 2 provides an overview of the responsibilities and powers in the various council models in England.

The Localism Act of 2011 granted English councils general power of competency and flexibility to enact local policy. Unitary authorities (e.g. Bristol) may elect a mayor to act as a leader of the council but this role does not have the economic or strategic powers associated with a combined authority.



Figure 2

MODELS OF DEVOLVED POWER

Localised decision-making may come in a variety of forms including city deals, freeports, enterprise zones and combined authorities.

Box 1 provides an overview of these options.

The remainder of the report will concentrate on these variations with a particular emphasis on combined authorities which have more evidence to draw upon.

Box 1

City Deals

City deals are bespoke packages of funding and decision-making powers negotiated between central government and local authorities and/or Local Enterprise Partnerships and other local bodies. There are over 30 city deals across the UK ranging in size and decision making powers.

Enterprise Zones

Enterprise zones are designated areas across the UK that provide tax breaks and government support including 100% business rate discount or 100% enhanced capital allowances to businesses making large investments in machinery. Enterprise zones provide simplified planning permission for industrial developments within specific areas.

Combined Authorities (CA)

A CA is a legal body set up using national legislation which enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and make collective decisions across council boundaries. The CA's legal status as a single body enables greater control over decision making and funds which were traditionally managed by UK government.

Freeports









Freeports are a special kind of port which are exempt from typical tax and customs rules. Imports can enter with simplified customs documentation and without paying tariffs. Taxes are only paid if the goods leave the freeport and are moved elsewhere in the UK. Eight new freeports were announced by the UK government in the recent 2021 budget. Whilst similar to enterprise zones, freeports are designed to specifically encourage businesses that import, process and then re-export goods rather than more general business support.

COMBINED AUTHORITIES





A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation which enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and make collective decisions across council boundaries.

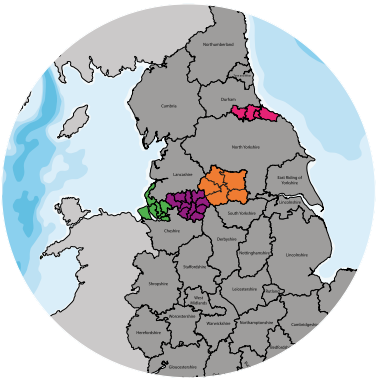
CAs enable councils to make joint decisions about key services, such as infrastructure, and have the combined power and resources to implement change. For example, this could include transport links across council boundaries or a strategy to attract businesses to a region. The CA's legal status as a single body enables greater control over decision making and funds which were traditionally managed by UK government.

There are currently ten combined authorities in England. Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) was the first region to form a devolution deal with the UK Government in 2014 before the introduction of the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act in 2016.

NATURE OF CA DEVOLVED SETTLEMENTS	GREATER MANCHESTER	LIVERPOOL CITY REGION	WEST YORKSHIRE	TEES VALLEY
 Metro-Mayor	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Mayoral Development Corporation	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Mayor Acting As Police And Crime Commissioner	✓	✗	✓	✗
 100% Business Rate Retention	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Single Investment Fund	£30 Million per year	£30 Million per year	£38 Million per year	£15 Million per year
 Power Over Consolidated Transport Budget	✓	✓	✗	✓
 Bus Franchising Powers	✓	✓	✓	✗
 Adult Education Budget	✓	✓	✓	✓

REGIONS

-  **GREATER MANCHESTER**
BOLTON, BURY, MANCHESTER, OLDHAM, ROCHDALE, SALFORD, STOCKPORT, TAMESIDE, TRAFFORD AND WIGAN
-  **LIVERPOOL CITY REGION**
LIVERPOOL, WIRRAL, KNOWSLEY, SEFTON, ST HELENS AND HALTON
-  **WEST YORKSHIRE**
BRADFORD, CALDERDALE, KIRKLEES, LEEDS AND WAKEFIELD
-  **TEES VALLEY**
DARLINGTON, HARTLEPOOL, MIDDLESBOROUGH, REDCAR & CLEVELAND AND STOCKTON-ON-TEES



GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

The CA consists of leaders of all the councils in the region and is typically chaired by a directly elected metro mayor who is both a member, and the chair, of the CA. The metro mayor is intended to be a single point of accountability for decision making. Each CA works alongside a Local Enterprise Partnership which are partnerships between local authorities and business leaders to promote local business interests. Metro mayors usually establish a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC), which are organisations that invest in land and infrastructure to boost regional economic growth.

MDCs enable localised regeneration through acquiring land and reduce bureaucracy by acting as both the planning and development authority. MDCs are more advantageous than Urban Development Corporations which do not possess planning authority.

Each devolution deal includes an investment fund of between £15m and £38m annually. This funding can be placed into a 'single pot' alongside EU structural funds, transport funds, the Adult Education Budget and the Transforming Cities Fund.



SUMMARY OF COUNCIL DECISION MAKING POWERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Whilst local councils in Northern Ireland have some key responsibilities, their powers and budgets are limited and constrained within the wider parameters set by the Northern Ireland Executive. Local councils in Northern Ireland have limited ability to create significant regeneration due to a lack of both devolved authority and access to de-centralised funding.

The combined authority approach provides significant economic and planning powers, alongside dedicated funding to enable large-scale regeneration. The following section explores the role of combined authorities, freeports and city deals across a range of case-studies before considering implications within Belfast City Council. The following case studies provide snap-shots of complex projects organised under the broad themes of regeneration, infrastructure, and business growth and innovation.

CASE STUDY 1: GREATER MANCHESTER (GMCA)



GREATER MANCHESTER (GMCA)

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has received the largest range of devolved powers outside of London, including responsibility for a multibillion pound health and social care budget. The corporate strategy places emphasis on creating economically and socially vibrant communities with accountable leadership.

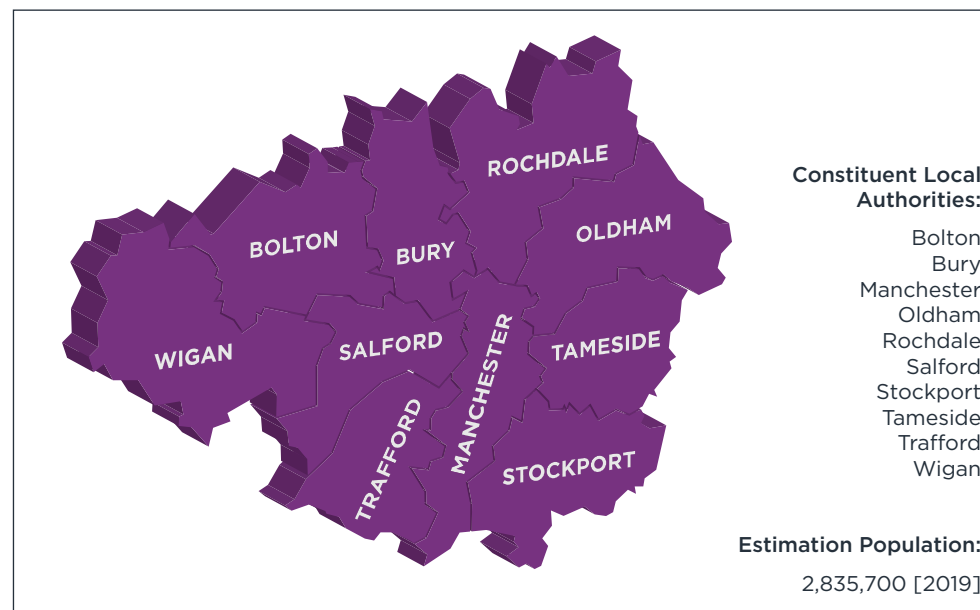
Regeneration

Regeneration in GMCA has focused on the effective use of existing sites and developing town centres outside of central Manchester. The Town Centre Challenge initiative enables localised regeneration and utilises strategic planning to take advantage of existing building stock. A regeneration development in Stockport is a recent example of the strategic capacity of GMCA to facilitate streamlined planning and building regulations approvals to create 75 local homes on a vacant hospital site.

Infrastructure

GMCA's control of a consolidated transport budget has enabled an integrated infrastructure strategy for the region. The CA has placed emphasis on connectivity between regions to facilitate jobs and opportunities. The combination of an international airport in Manchester and streamlined public transport places GMCA at the centre of the Northern Powerhouse initiative.

Large scale infrastructure developments have taken place throughout greater Manchester including the £50 million Stockport interchange allowing for a transport hub in the town as well as the development of a 180m footbridge to the major commercial hub at Stockport Exchange.



Business Growth and Innovation

Greater Manchester utilised innovative policy-making with the 'earn back' model which enables GMCA to maintain up to £30m a year of tax from the growth it creates through its Revolving Investment Funds (RIFs). RIFs are loans on a commercial basis with any returns going back into the fund, allowing it to grow over time. These loans are usually provided to private sector infrastructure and construction projects.

The GMCA works collectively with regional partners to advance business and skills in key growth sectors to overcome regional productivity issues. GMCA's partnership with 'The Growth Company' has facilitated innovation and growth, providing specialist advice and funding to over 5,000 start-ups and 16,000 business in 2018/2019.

The Growth Company has prioritised digital technologies through initiatives such as 'Digital 1000' to increase skills in the local employment market and enable businesses to implement digital technology. The GMCA, in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Partnership, recently launched the Innovation Greater Manchester programme to boost R&D development whilst aiming to create 100,000 jobs and an economic benefit of £7 billion.

An aerial photograph of Tees Valley, showing a dense urban area with a mix of brick and modern buildings. A prominent white arch bridge spans a wide river in the foreground. The sky is blue with wispy clouds. A dark blue banner in the top right corner contains the title text.

CASE STUDY 2: **TEES VALLEY** (TVCA)

TEES VALLEY (TVCA)

Regeneration

TVCA's 10-year investment plan allocated an investment of £588.2 million into the region to deliver a high value, low carbon economy aiming to create 16,475 jobs and £1.48 billion of additional cumulative output.

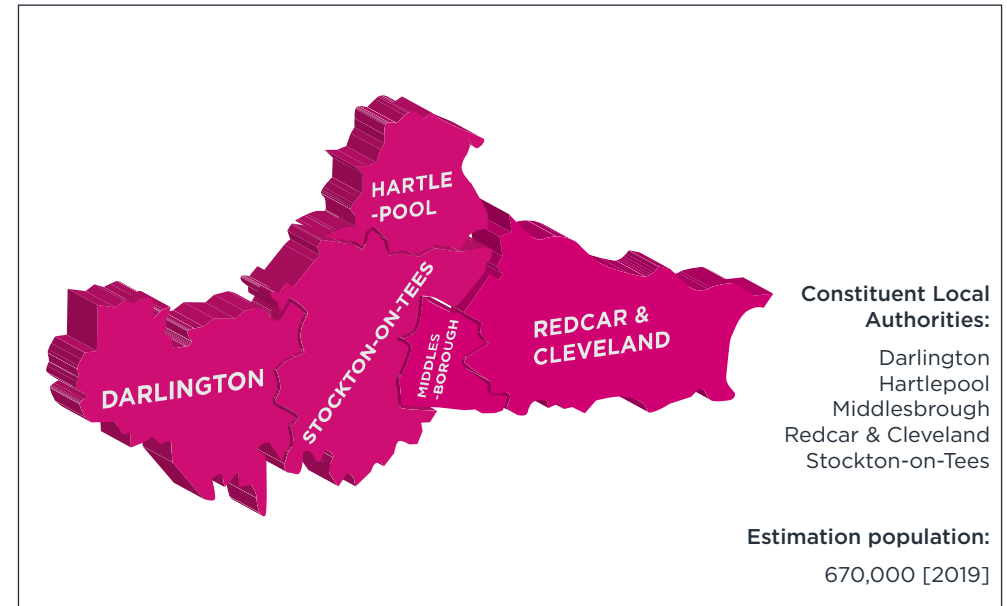
The TVCA has access to the indigenous growth fund of £50 million to regenerate the five boroughs of Tees Valley. This funding provides constituent councils of the TVCA control over the regeneration of vacant or derelict land, initiatives to develop town centres and strategic housing initiatives. This level of devolution enables TVCA to achieve inclusive place-based growth in a region without a major city.

Infrastructure

The alignment of economic and infrastructure strategies has facilitated strong integrated policy including the development of key road and railway projects.

Teesside International Airport was brought into public ownership alongside a strategic partnership with the Stobart group. The growth plan for the airport aims to establish ten new routes and a tenfold increase in passenger numbers by 2023. Tees Valley also has ambitions to become a low carbon, high value economy and has implemented region-wide cycling and walking schemes to contribute towards their environmental agenda. The development of a £650 million biomass powerplant within the freeport is another significant commitment to green energy development.

CASE STUDIES



Business Growth and Innovation

The CA have focused on creating more opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurial activity, resulting in an additional 1265 businesses in the Tees Valley region since 2016. TVCA has contributed to the growth of 17765 enterprises in 2019, most of which are small and median enterprises (SME). This approach has contributed to an increase of 3100 jobs between June 2018 and June 2019.

TVCA established the Teeswork MDC, the UK's largest freeport, which provides businesses with tax incentives such as 100% business rate relief. The development of the freeport has incentivised innovation, infrastructure and regeneration in the Tees Valley region creating a vibrant entrepreneurial space, alongside green initiatives including a wind turbine factory in the South Bank Zone.

TVCA has eight Enterprise Zones to attract SMEs specialising in locally identified growth areas, for example, petrochemicals, renewable energy and the professional services sector. Enterprise Zones offer companies a range of benefits including business rate relief of up to £55,000 per year and enhanced capital allowance for investments in qualifying growth sectors (e.g. manufacturing and renewable energy).



CASE STUDY 3:
GLASGOW CITY REGION
CITY DEAL
(GCRC)

GLASGOW CITY REGION CITY DEAL (GCRCD)

The Glasgow City Region City Deal includes eight local authorities in Glasgow and its surrounding area who work collectively in ‘The Cabinet’ with oversight provided by the UK and Scottish Governments.

The city deal is worth a total of **£1.13 billion** and includes:

21 infrastructure projects funded by the UK, Scottish Government and Local Authorities.

3 innovation projects supported by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

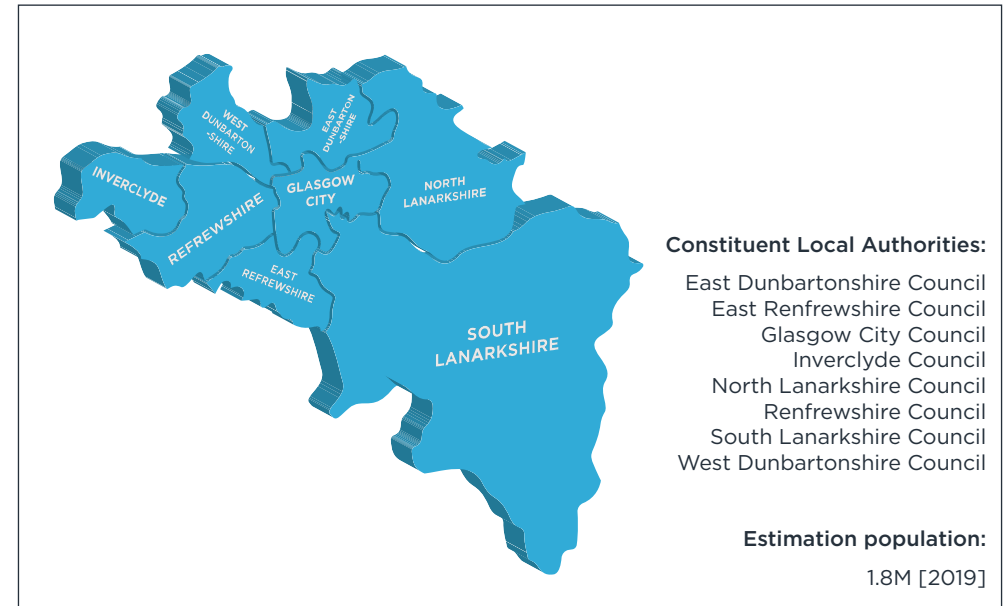
3 Labour market projects supported by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Scotland does not currently have legislation to create a combined authority but models of devolved decision-making are currently under review in a local governance review. The Glasgow City Region City Deal (GCRCD) has enabled eight local authorities to act as one region in terms of economic and regeneration strategies and developing funding bids to support large-scale change. In comparison to the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD), the GCRCD is predominantly focused on infrastructure.

Models of city deals vary and it is notable that the Glasgow model includes the eight member authorities as key decision makers.

Regeneration

The regeneration projects in the GCRCD have focused on inclusive growth contributing to local and regional regeneration. Glasgow, like other regions, has attempted to address environmental issues by enhancing flood protection in the area. However, the most significant focus has been on housing and commercial development. The Ravenscraig development is a successful example of transforming derelict land to a large-scale housing development.



Infrastructure

The economies of Glasgow and neighbouring towns are intrinsically linked and therefore emphasis has been placed on enhanced connectivity between the city and local towns to address regional imbalances. Over £200 million has been spent on infrastructure with 21 business cases approved and 17 projects completed in 2019/2020.

Business Growth and Innovation

Business growth and innovation is a theme of the city deal with significant funding allocated to create facilities committed to medical technology (with funds coming partly from BEIS in the UK Government). This is designed to coordinate knowledge transfer and facilitate high growth sectors, whilst creating high value jobs.

The GCR city deal has led to the refurbishment of the BioCity campus in North Lanarkshire, creating 149 jobs and raising £18.7 million of private investment. The programme has supported 65 companies to develop new medical technology and healthcare services. A £38 million grant has also been allocated for the Living laboratory, which is projected to provide 446 high value jobs and an economic benefit of £136 million over an 8-year period.

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

The case studies provide a snapshot of examples of devolved decision-making in England and Scotland. Whilst the focus of each individual case study varies, devolved powers allow regional areas to prioritise local issues of concern. Although devolution deals vary, the case studies demonstrate the importance of neighbouring councils working together to develop 'big picture' strategy that often applies outside of local boundaries. Working together as one organisation enhances the power of the region to speak as 'one voice', increasing investment and funding potential.

Partnership between local councils requires strong collaboration, negotiation and occasionally sacrifice. The role of city deals may act as a stepping stone to wider devolved powers for a city region. The Glasgow model demonstrates the effectiveness of focusing on regional issues whilst also placing elected members of local councils at the centre of decision making.

The following section will explore opportunities and challenges for devolved decision-making within local councils in Northern Ireland.



IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS FOR BELFAST

1. Existing decision-making powers for councils in Northern Ireland are narrow

This report demonstrates that councils in Northern Ireland have a narrow range of powers compared to other models of local governance within the UK. This project has explored a range of options in devolution, ranging from large-scale CAs to inclusive growth city deals. The implementation of substantive, devolved decision-making – such as a CA – would require radical political, social, cultural and legislative change in Northern Ireland. English local councils have experienced three significant reforms during the past decade but there appears to be limited appetite for reform in local government within the Northern Ireland Executive. This may be indicative of a wider culture of limited policy reform and difficulties in making politically challenging decisions in the Executive. Prior attempts to redistribute regeneration decision-making powers from the DfC to local councils failed due to a lack of agreement by both the Executive and the Assembly on the what powers should be devolved.

The case studies demonstrate the range of different powers negotiated by local councils and a ‘menu’ of options may be a way to increase devolution in Northern Ireland. Some powers may lend themselves more readily to devolved decision-making than others; for example, regeneration. Whilst the examples vary, the role of cities in driving change remains clear. This report may be used as part of a wider scoping exercise to explore the possibility of extending powers in Belfast to enable the city to drive forward priority policy issues. Furthermore, stepped changes in current legislation would allow for the evaluation and monitoring of any proposed changes.

2. Localised decision-making and powers have the potential to act as a catalyst for innovation and regeneration

The case studies demonstrate that regional policy-making has enabled some local councils to lead on priorities that matter most to their locality which may not be as pressing, or indeed visible, at a national level.

Localised policies can address inequalities through infrastructure and technology projects that may spread expertise and wealth to areas that have previously felt disconnected from cities. The Manchester experience highlights the role of connectivity between cities and towns. Furthermore, business growth has been significantly enhanced through joined-up thinking on skill deficits and development of the digital technology industries.

The case study examples demonstrate that devolved power may enable councils to make use of disused land both within and beyond locality boundaries to benefit the wider region. Devolved decision-making could enable councils to take control of strategic planning whilst implementing economic policies and tax incentives to stimulate economic activity and innovation.

Devolved decision-making aims to add value through strategic co-ordination and joined-up policy making. However, the medium and long-term effectiveness of devolved council decision-making continues to require ongoing evaluation. Performance analysis is required to comprehensively assess any proposed changes in local governance to provide evidence of the effectiveness of any changes.

3. Freeports and Enterprise Zones may provide enhanced investment to drive strategic growth

A review of the available evidence indicates that there are a range of options to encourage investment and growth to a region including, enhanced powers, different structures of decision making, freeports and enterprise zones. Freeports and enterprise zones may offer an opportunity to capitalise on wider Department for Economy (DfE) strategy to encourage businesses to locate to Belfast to grow identified areas such as cyber security and advanced manufacturing. A freeport could provide Belfast with clear economic incentives such as deferral of duty, competitive R&D tax rates and 0% rate of employer national insurance contributions for some roles. The development of a freeport and/or Enterprise Zone may provide Belfast with a much needed catalyst for growth particularly as the city begins to emerge from changes in consumer spending and city use due to the pandemic.

4. Strong leadership is central to ‘big picture’ change

The case studies and wider review of evidence highlight the importance of collaboration, agreed strategy and strong leadership for successful devolved decision-making. Localised decision-making is reliant on collaborative and engaging leadership both within each council and between neighbouring authorities. A single point of decision making and accountability to drive decisions forward is a common theme within the review of case studies. At present, decision making in Belfast lies within multiple government departments with limited coherent strategy for change. The pace of change, disconnect between departments and competing priorities make it challenging to implement effective plans.

The role of ‘soft power’ and strong alliances with local partners and inter-regional collaborators is essential. Whilst enhanced models of devolution, such as the combined authority model, offer the largest amount of independence from centralised government, the role of a single elected mayor who represents a large region could prove challenging within the context of the social and political landscape of Northern Ireland, where politics can be fractious and divided.

The BRCD may provide a useful testbed of enhanced partnerships between local councils, universities and business partners to develop regional change in the greater Belfast area. However, the case study examples demonstrate it can be difficult to regenerate regions without powers in infrastructure, transport, and wider education and employability policies.

5. Local councils could have an enhanced role in policy development in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has a history of political instability and limited strategic policy development. In the absence of strong and ambitious policy-making by the Executive, there may be a role for local councils to have greater input for change. Councils may have the internal expertise to lead on areas such as economic regeneration which historically suffered due to a failure of the Executive to produce and implement ambitious long-term strategies for Northern Ireland. Further work is needed to ascertain what barriers exist within local council decision-making and what additional powers and resources are needed to facilitate strategic economic and social change in Northern Ireland.



CONCLUSION

Councils in Northern Ireland have a narrower range of powers and smaller budgets than in the rest of the UK, with most decisions on economic and infrastructure issues being taken by the Northern Ireland Executive rather than more locally.

This report explores a range of models of devolved decision-making alongside wider models of innovation including City Deals, Freeports and Enterprise Zones in England and Scotland. It provides a snapshot of options that may have application to enhance growth within Belfast.

Northern Ireland requires ambitious change in order to fulfil the commitment from the DfE in the 10X economy and subsequent skills strategy to grow innovative industries such as cyber security and advanced manufacturing. Enhanced powers within Belfast have the potential to act as a catalyst for these strategies, providing joined-up policy making and interdepartmental working with a budget to kick-start innovation and change.

This report aims to provide information that can inform a discussion about this issues. We would invite views on the following questions:



What devolved powers would Belfast and/or the wider city region benefit from?

Is there a role for Enterprise Zones or Freeports to assist with the regeneration of greater Belfast?

How does Belfast need to respond as other competitor cities gain greater powers over economic development, infrastructure and regeneration?

Would there be public support for devolving more powers to local councils?

Email your views to info@belfastchamber.com

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