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A Tale of One City: The *Devo Manc* Deal and its Implications for English Devolution

DANIEL KENEALY

Abstract

On 2 November 2014 George Osborne stood in the impressive great council chamber of Manchester town hall. Flanked by the ten leaders of Greater Manchester's local authorities Osborne announced a devolution deal for the city-region. Greater Manchester would receive a significant package of powers over transport, housing, planning, skills, business support, and welfare in exchange for creating new governance structures including a directly elected Mayor for the city-region. This article explores the background to the *Devo Manc* deal, arguing that it is the product of both a long history of local government collaboration in Greater Manchester, and George Osborne's desire for a sweeping restructure of English governance. It traces how the key decisions were taken quickly and by a small number of key officials. The article also identifies some flaws in *Devo Manc* and considers whether it is an appropriate model for other city-regions in the UK.

Keywords: Devolution, cities, England, Manchester, UK Treasury, regionalism.

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Introduction

In the space of a few months during 2014-2015 George Osborne, and the leaders of the ten local authorities (listed in table 2) that together form the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), reached a set of agreements that, once implemented, have the potential

to be the most significant development in the way that the UK is governed since the devolution settlements for Scotland and Wales. This article explores the background of *Devo Manc*, sets out its details, and raises questions about the democratic legitimacy of the process and how it will work in practice. It also places the deal in the broader context of questions about the governance of England, questions that have become especially prominent in the aftermath of Scotland's 2014 independence referendum. Research for this article was conducted between December 2014 and August 2015 as part of an ESRC-funded project on constitutional change in the UK. Conducted with colleagues at the University of Edinburgh the research involved a set of elite interviews with North West politicians, local government officials, civil servants in the UK Treasury and Cabinet Office, as well as a survey of public attitudes across the UK.¹

What is *Devo Manc*?

Before tracing the development of *Devo Manc* it is important to understand precisely what it entails. On 2 November 2014 George Osborne and the ten leaders of the GMCA signed a document committing to devolve powers from Whitehall to the city-region.² Some of these powers will be exercised directly by the GMCA, which has been in place since 2011 and was the first combined authority established in England. The GMCA brings together the ten leaders of the local authorities in the city-region and was a formalisation of previous, less institutionalised forms of collaboration. Each GMCA member holds a cross city-region portfolio responsibility (e.g. transport, crime and policing, employment and skills, internationalisation and marketing, etc.). Other powers will be transferred to a new, directly elected Mayor of Greater Manchester (GM) – that is the area covered by the ten authorities

comprising the GMCA. The creation of a Mayor was a precondition, set down by Osborne, for the transfer of the powers.

The GMCA will take on powers in the areas of business support and growth, apprenticeships and further education, and welfare. Several elements of the UK government's Business Growth Service – targeted at businesses based in England with fewer than 250 employees and less than £40 million in turnover – have been or are to be devolved, involving the transfer of some budget lines from Whitehall's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to the GMCA. The GMCA will thus be able to tailor the provision of business support including mentoring business leaders, consultancy support, training, access to finance, and advice on increasing export sales.

More substantial are a set of powers aimed at helping boost employment in the city-region. The Apprenticeship Grant for Employers – introduced by the UK's coalition government in 2011 – is now controlled by the GMCA as opposed to BIS in Whitehall. The agreement also gives the GMCA broader powers to shape further education provision, offering financial incentives to education providers to develop the skills most in demand by local employers.

The GMCA will also be able to build on previous successes. The 'Working Well' pilot scheme – launched in May 2014 and aimed at helping those with illness or disability who have been unable to secure sustainable employment through the Work Programme – is to be extended, with Whitehall funding linked to job outcomes. Targeted at those on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) who have been on the UK government's welfare-to-work scheme for two years, 'Working Well' provides individually tailored packages of support for a further two

years, with up to a year of in-work support to increase the chance that employment, if secured, is retained. Although still in its infancy, 'Working Well' has hit its initial targets. However, the very small numbers of individuals it has managed to support into employment raises questions about whether the Work Programme is correctly identifying individuals who are capable of so-called 'work related activity'.

Also in the area of welfare, the GMCA will have the opportunity to jointly commission, along with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the next phase of the Work Programme. Avanta, G4S, and Seetec currently hold the contract to deliver the Work Programme in contract package area 7, which covers the GMCA's territory as well as Warrington, Cheshire, and other parts of the North West of England. Those contracts are not due for renewal until 2017 and it remains unclear how much scope the GMCA will have to influence the actual workings of the Work Programme, some of elements of which – particularly its conditionality and sanctioning – have come in for considerable criticism. This new power is far short of the move to devolve the Work Programme to the Scottish Parliament, one of the outcomes of the 2014 Smith Commission in the aftermath of Scotland's independence referendum.

The new GM Mayor will take on responsibilities in four broad areas: transport, planning, housing, and policing. In transport the Mayor will receive, from Whitehall, a consolidated multi-year budget as well as responsibility for franchised bus services, railways stations, and smart ticketing. GM's political leaders are quick to point out that transport is a vital service underpinning much of what the city-region wants to do, from economic growth to higher employment (Interview, GMCA Member 1). They eye, with envy, the multi-year transport

budgets that enable the Mayor of London to engage in longer-term planning and the delivery of projects such as Crossrail.

The Mayor's most notable power in the area of planning is the ability to create a framework for managing spatial planning across the city-region. Alongside that, a Housing Investment Fund of £300 million will be devolved. The fund may be 'loaned out and repaid two and a half times' over the next decade, creating a total pot of around £1.5 billion, and helping to support the construction of 10-15,000 new houses.³ The Mayor will also take control of any money flowing back to the GMCA through the revised 'Earn Back' arrangement, which has been considerably simplified by *Devo Manc*, creating greater certainty about the flow of funding.⁴ Policing powers, already residing in a Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), will simply be transferred to the Mayor, with the post of PCC ceasing to exist.

The introduction of a directly elected Mayor is the biggest governance change brought in by *Devo Manc*. The Mayor will become the eleventh member of the GMCA and will permanently chair that body following their election in May 2017. The ten council leaders will continue to sit on the GMCA, each with a specific portfolio responsibility, supporting and advising the Mayor. The GMCA will have the power to reject the Mayor's strategies and amend the Mayor's spending plans if two-thirds of the members agree. On more general public service issues voting on the GMCA will be by majority, with each of the eleven members holding one vote. The current scrutiny arrangements for the GMCA, consisting of a pool of thirty non-executive councillors from across the ten constituent local authorities, will continue.

Nothing in *Devo Manc* gives the Mayor, or the GMCA, control over any new fiscal levers. For the most part what is being devolved are policy responsibilities and (ever shrinking) budgets to go with them. Even on the expenditure side the powers on offer represent about £1.5 billion out of total GM public expenditure of £22 billion. In October 2015 Osborne announced a radical shake-up of the way local government was to be **finance**d in England. Within a decade the core grant from Whitehall will be phased out, replaced by the retention of locally raised business rates by each local authority. That announcement, building on a March 2015 decision to allow GM to retain all additional business rate growth, represents a significant move towards fiscal devolution with local authorities empowered to vary the rates to suit local interests and circumstances.⁵

Devo Manc was supplemented, in February 2015, by a deal to devolve GM's £6 billion health and social care budget, a large part of which was already controlled by GM in one way or another. The original 2014 plan invited the GMCA and the city-region's Clinical Commissioning Groups to develop a plan for the integration of health and social care (the ten local authorities had already taken steps in that direction individually). The February 2015 announcement went further. A new structure is to be established in the city-region, bringing together the ten local authorities, twelve Clinical Commissioning Groups, local NHS England management, regulators, the Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations, and HealthWatch (the local consumer champion for health care).⁶ GM confronts a complex set of health problems and local health researchers and campaigners have expressed concern over local control, and the possibility of further outsourcing of services. But the potential of the deal is a more tightly integrated health and social care system in the region, with fewer beds blocked,

greater efficiencies, and a redistribution of some funding from hospitals to social care budgets that are creaking under the weight of Whitehall cuts.

A final set of additional powers, announced in July 2015, committed to establishing a GM Land Commission, to transferring of the powers of the GM Fire Service to the new Mayor, to allowing the new Mayor to create Mayoral Development Corporations, and for the GMCA to take on decision-making powers about how to allocate EU structural funds across the city-region. Considered as a whole *Devo Manc* is geared towards improving the economic performance of the region but also improving the delivery of public services. The two things are tightly linked in the minds of GM's leaders. One GMCA leader put it quite clearly, 'the strategy is to link local economic development to public service reform ... Growth happens but it's not linked to public sector reform. If you take decisions locally you can make efficiencies and you can get synergies' (Interview, GMCA Member 1).

How did *Devo Manc* happen?

It is hardly surprising that GM is in the vanguard of city-region devolution. The ten local authorities have established a long track record of cooperation across the conurbation, a track record not replicated to the same extent anywhere else. Following Margaret Thatcher's abolition of what her government labelled 'wasteful and unnecessary' Metropolitan Counties in her 1986 local government reforms⁷ – ostensibly designed to weaken local government and fragment responsibility for public service delivery – GM's authorities took immediate efforts to preserve their cooperation even in the absence of a formal layer of government. That decision proved critical, for it set in motion a process of creating softer, less formally institutionalised spaces in which GM's leaders could do business, coordinate their public

service provision, and attain economies of scale. It was driven by recognition that the lines on maps separating one local authority from another often bore little, if any, resemblance to meaningful functional boundaries.

In the nearly thirty years since, a succession of institutions – as well as informal mechanisms of cooperation and coordination – have sprung up in GM.⁸ 1986 can thus be seen as a critical juncture, in which a series of seemingly small decisions created certain path dependencies that shaped the way that GM came to be governed. The starting point was the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), which functioned as the overarching vehicle for intergovernmental cooperation and service delivery in the late 1980s and 1990s. Slowly, GM witnessed a shift from ad-hoc developments to a conscious effort to rebuild and restore metropolitan governance.⁹ In 2009, Gordon Brown's government announced that GM was to be given pilot statutory city-region status and the coalition government moved to formally establish the GMCA in 2011, representing the solidification of formerly softer structures.

GM's political leaders are proud of this legacy. They see it as vital to their recent successes: 'Part of this is ancient history, going back to the abolition of the Greater Manchester Council, and we've seen a 25 year track record of working together' (Interview, GMCA Member 2). Across the M62 in Merseyside both politicians and local government officials recognise that GM's historical track record of collaboration has put Merseyside's efforts to shame (Interview, senior official, Liverpool City Council). 'The main difference is that in Merseyside you have six Labour councils all fighting each other' (Interview, Member of Knowsley Council).

Since at least the mid-1990s, GM's leaders have been pressing hard for Whitehall to transfer powers to them. Two individuals – Richard Leese and Howard Bernstein – have proven crucial to developing both the capacity for GM to work collaboratively and, more specifically, the narrative on which *Devo Manc* has come to focus. Leese has been leader of Manchester City Council since 1996, Bernstein its chief executive since 1998. When they speak of devolution it is very much in terms of boosting the GM economy and closing the deficit of roughly £5 billion between what the city-region generates in tax revenues and what it receives in public expenditure. In part they envision doing this through the new economic powers contained in the devolution deal. But GM's leaders also look forward to a future of fiscal devolution to the city-region. In all of this, the rhetoric of municipal socialism that characterised the drive for greater local autonomy in the 1980s has gone, replaced by a focus on the entrepreneurial city making its contribution to Gross Value Added.¹⁰

Whilst the demand for more powers was there for years, there was a gap on the supply side. New Labour, in office from 1997 to 2010 were initially pre-occupied with their plans for regional assemblies, which came crashing down in the aftermath of the North East's 2004 referendum. Leese – one of Labour's most senior elected officials at the local level – backed his party's policy in the early 2000s but, after it stalled, returned to the idea of city-region governance. Leese and Bernstein had been on the cusp of signing a deal with Gordon Brown's government but that deal failed to make it over the line before May 2010. The coalition government then moved quickly with 'real engagement from the Treasury and the Chancellor ... It's really important to note that these things can only happen with the Treasury's blessing' (Interview, GMCA Leader 2). But Leese and Bernstein were far from content with simply

creating the GMCA. They wanted to go beyond formalised cooperation within statutory structures, and start to take control of new powers from Whitehall.

Developments in Whitehall, and especially in the Treasury, were of vital importance in the lead up to the summer of 2014. George Osborne had been won over to the idea of devolving powers to cities and city-regions. The policy landscape began, in 2013 and 2014, to become cluttered with weighty reports calling for the devolution of powers to cities and city-regions.¹¹ Of particular importance was the City Growth Commission. Established by the RSA it was chaired by the influential economist, and former chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, Jim O’Neill, himself from Manchester. By early 2014 O’Neill’s commission was speaking a similar language to that of Leese and Bernstein, the language of cities as drivers of economic growth, innovation, and productivity. In the aftermath of the financial crisis and subsequent recession, with a need to boost growth to help combat the deficit, and a longer running challenge to rebalance the UK economy away from London and the South East, such thinking was music to Osborne’s ears.

The Chancellor, who has a dual role as the UK government’s chief political strategist, was also drawn in by the possibility of wrong-footing Labour by making a decisive move on English devolution where they had failed, despite many ideas and schemes.¹² In June 2014, shortly after his party had suffered heavy losses in the 2014 European elections, Osborne delivered his ‘Northern Powerhouse’ speech in which he committed to connecting the key cities of the North of England – Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Hull, and Leeds – through investment in better rail and road links.¹³ The ‘Northern Powerhouse’ is the bigger picture narrative that UK government ministers have attempted to situate *Devo Manc* within.

Through the summer of 2014, *Devo Manc* became the priority for the Treasury. It was the Treasury who contacted GM, seeking ways to turn the ‘Northern Powerhouse’ into concrete developments. Osborne tasked two Treasury officials – John Kingman, the Second Permanent Secretary, and David Silk, the Deputy Director responsible for housing, planning and cities – to work with Bernstein and Leese to construct a package of powers to be devolved. At the GM end Mike Emmerich – chief executive of the think tank New Economy, a former Treasury and Downing Street official, and a long-standing advocate of city devolution – was pivotal. Working closely with New Economy allowed Bernstein and his officials to work more quickly, producing documents that inspired confidence in the Treasury that GM could deliver (Interview, senior civil servant, HM Treasury).

Osborne played an active role in ensuring that *Devo Manc* was supported across various Whitehall departments. His role was especially important because various Whitehall departments – especially the Department of Transport and BIS – had to be cajoled into relinquishing policy responsibilities, and the budgets to go with them. The Treasury, especially one headed by a politically active Chancellor, is a powerful enough department within Whitehall to bring other departments into line behind a given policy agenda. The Treasury initially worked on *Devo Manc* largely in secret, using their in-house spending teams and presenting the outcome as a *fait accompli* to other Whitehall departments. If a Cabinet minister objected, the Chancellor would deal with them personally, clearing any roadblocks. Otherwise, the Chancellor largely left the politics to his special adviser, Neil O’Brien (Interview, senior civil servant, HM Treasury; Interview, senior civil servant, Cabinet Office).

The major sticking point, once Osborne had brought Whitehall on board, was over the directly elected Mayor. Put simply, GM's leaders did not want one but Osborne insisted. It has been somewhat fudged given that, as discussed above, the Mayor could end up being a largely glorified 'chair' of the GMCA with little institutional power base. But Osborne's insistence on a Mayor brings us back to the politics of it all. 'Osborne has identified the prospect of a Boris [Johnson] for the North' (Interview, Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner).

Devo Manc was thus the result of a double coincide of interests. A long-standing interest amongst GM leaders to win back powers for their city-region, coupled with a track record of successful cooperation across a large conurbation, was met by a set of political and economic interests held by a bold and powerful Chancellor.

The bigger picture

Whilst *Devo Manc* feeds into the Chancellor's 'Northern Powerhouse' it must also be considered in the broader context of reforming the governance of England. Much of the focus has been on the attempt to introduce English Votes for English Laws (EVEL) in the House of Commons. EVEL has become, for some, a sort of panacea for the question of the governance of England. The survey conducted as part of the project on which research for this article is derived found that when asked to select one single change to the way that England is governed, people do tend to support EVEL. Other surveys have uncovered similar results.¹⁴ But when we asked separately about EVEL, regionalism, and city-regions, it becomes clear that all have significant levels of support. There is no reason to see EVEL and city-regions as mutually exclusive. Indeed they are attempts to tackle very different questions.

There are, it seems, two facets to 'the English Question'. The first is about England as a single unit being properly represented in the UK's governing arrangements. For that, EVEL may well be the answer. The second question, just as important, is about decentralisation and, based on our survey findings, voters are open to various possibilities (table 1).

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

But is *Devo Manc* a model for decentralisation within England? Other parts of England are seeking similar deals and, as of December 2015, five deals had been announced (Sheffield city region, Tees Valley, North East, Liverpool city region, West Midlands). Commonalities across these deals include transitioning to a directly-elected Mayor, a governance model that sees local authority leaders assuming new and additional portfolio responsibilities as part of the Mayor's cabinet, and a focus on additional investment funds, adult skills provision, transport, housing, planning, and business development. However, no two deals are identical reflecting the specific politics of the areas and none of the five deals signed since *Devo Manc* are as extensive (e.g. Sheffield's Mayor will not assume the PCC and fire functions, there is no mention of devolving health and social care, and the Sheffield City Region will have a more limited role in the Work Programme compared to the GMCA). Numerous other bids from local authorities for more powers are currently under consideration by the Treasury but, at the time of writing, the outcomes have not been announced.

What can be said is that *Devo Manc* lit a fire under other combined authorities and larger metropolitan councils. Seeing what GM was able to accomplish has seemingly made other local authorities want to capture similar powers. There is already evidence of a domino effect.

The basic framework for such deals is now quite well understood. The Treasury want to see evidence of an ability by local authorities to work together to deliver growth and more efficient public services, part of which is a willingness to adopt the elected Mayor model. Taking England as a whole, the vast majority of its territory is covered by local authorities that, individually or through combined authorities, have submitted bids to the Treasury or are planning to do so.¹⁵ Clearly, Osborne has created a template that is transferable to other metropolitan areas and cities with clearly defined commuter belts. But the template cannot be applied in such a way as to cover the entire territory of England and will thus add to England's fragmented governance arrangements. Beyond that lack of universal applicability, the *Devo Manc* model has shortcomings and many challenges lay ahead for GM's leaders as they seek to build public consensus and implement the deal.

Challenges ahead

In GM, there are challenges ahead. *Devo Manc* has its critics locally, which GM's political leaders are aware of. The major criticisms levelled at *Devo Manc* are that it lacks democratic legitimacy, transparency, and appropriate scrutiny, and that it is merely a cover for deep cuts to local authority budgets. It is hard to deny the first charge given that *Devo Manc* was manufactured by half a dozen elites in Whitehall and Manchester town hall. Even within the elite, this particular elite worked in secret, imposing decisions on key stakeholders. The only formal opportunities that GM citizens have had to submit their views was a short and poorly publicised consultation run by the Department for Communities and Local Government (23 January to 13 February 2015), and a half-day public session by the House of Commons' Communities and Local Government committee (on 26 October 2015).

The appointment of an interim Mayor – who will hold office until the May 2017 mayoral election and who will be influential in shaping the early implementation of *Devo Manc* – epitomised these failings. Tony Lloyd, a former Labour MP, and since 2012 GM's Police and Crime Commissioner, was appointed, over Wigan council leader Lord Peter Smith, at a closed-door meeting involving the ten local authority leaders. Questions to the candidates had to be submitted in advance and could only come from local councillors. At least the proceedings were video-captured and subsequently buried somewhere in the depths of the GMCA website. Local leaders pointed to the interim nature of the appointment as justification for the process.

Yet, speaking to GM local politicians, it is remarkable that they actually embrace the secrecy with which they have proceeded to date. One GMCA leader stressed the technicalities of the deal and recognised that they were 'moving this forward ahead of public opinion' (Interview, GMCA Leader 3). Another recognised that, 'the Combined Authority knows it hasn't done particularly well with engaging the public in what we're trying to do ... The opportunity is there to engage more with the public. At the last Combined Authority meeting we agreed to move forward with a communications strategy' (Interview, GMCA Leader 2). But a communications strategy is not public engagement. A third local leader suggested that 'when we can start to say what it [*Devo Manc*] will mean, then it'll be easier to engage the public ... When people can feel it, then people will engage' (Interview, GMCA Leader 1). Now that the deal has been agreed there does seem to be a willingness on the part of local leaders to engage but the mistrust it seems has already set in, as a result of the way the deal was brokered.

Based on the interviews I conducted with GM leaders, there were palpable fears that they might lose control of a public debate and thus not get the prize that they have been seeking for so many years. These fears seemed to be connected to an anti-politics attitude that might see local citizens rejecting the creation of new political offices and structures. Indeed, when Manchester (just one of the 10 authorities of the GMCA) held a referendum on whether to introduce a Mayor for the city in May 2012, voters rejected the proposal by 53.2% to 46.8%. So determined were GM's leaders to secure the powers under the radar that the task of the interim Mayor has now become 'to sell and promote' the deal (Interview, GMCA Leader 4).

Locally, the calls for a referendum are growing with the Greater Manchester Referendum Campaign for Democratic Devolution planning to target the council wards of the ten GMCA leaders at the May 2016 local elections. Spending time talking to activists and citizens in the GM area it is clear that the general level of knowledge of *Devo Manc* is poor, a failure of GM's leaders.¹⁶ But there is evidence to suggest that people are willing to engage, and want to spend more time discussing these important issues.

In a survey conducted in early 2015 with colleagues we found only a minority of around one in four people within each part of the UK said that too much time has been spent discussing how the UK should be governed (table 2).

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

There is also evidence that people do want decisions to be taken at a local level and that they trust their councils far more than they trust Whitehall.¹⁷ Taken together this ought to be a

recipe for localism and widespread public engagement. But that can only happen if local leaders are committed to participatory democracy. It will not occur by transferring powers from Whitehall to a shadowy, distant combined authority chaired by a interim Mayor for whom nobody voted. As interim Mayor Tony Lloyd has a chance, before May 2017, to think about how to build an inclusive, participatory democracy across GM. He sees the need 'to get in and catch up. Connecting with the public has to be a part of this. Trickle down politics doesn't work any better than trickle down economics' (Interview, Tony Lloyd [Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner]). He must resist the urge to approach the job as if he were a salesman when the appropriate analogy is that of an architect. He needs to work with academics in the emerging field of public engagement¹⁸ if he has any chance of navigating the complex network of GM stakeholders.

The second critique of *Devo Manc* – that it is a way to help spread the blame for the cuts that are being administered to local government – is more contentious. UK government figures confirm that the overall spending power of the ten local authorities constituting the GMCA has been reduced since 2010/11 (table 3).

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Local authorities across the city-region therefore have to do more with less, and will have to continue to make savings in the years ahead as Whitehall cuts continue. GMCA leaders are fully aware of this but their counter-argument is that, given the makeup of the current UK government, such cuts are inevitable. They are thus faced with a choice: live with those cuts under the status quo arrangements, or take on more powers in an attempt to find efficiencies,

economies, and design services that are both more tailored to local needs and that might produce economic growth to mitigate. They have opted for the latter. Those of a more conspiratorial bent will continue to suggest that Osborne's motives are purely Machiavellian, designed to land the GMCA with a portion of the blame for the potential deterioration in public services. But the notion that GM's leaders are naïve about this possibility is inaccurate.

Conclusion

Devo Manc is a milestone in the development of English governance. It is the culmination of years of cooperation and lobbying by GM's leaders. It has become a reality thanks to a Chancellor – part motivated by economics, part by political calculations, and part by the quest for a legacy as he eyes the keys to 10 Downing Street – who was prepared to put his considerable political weight behind the project. Other local authorities are seeking similar powers, and some have already been successful in striking deals – somewhat smaller but certainly on the same direction of travel as *Devo Manc* – with Osborne. More will surely follow. For those in favour of greater local autonomy these deals, coupled with the Chancellor's announcement on business rates, are welcome. It is the lack of transparency and accountability in these developments that remains the biggest cause for concern. If radical changes to the way that England is governed are implemented without any serious effort at public consultation, and without any concern for trying to revitalise and renew local democracy, it will be a missed opportunity.

Table 1. Agreement with different constitutional options for England, by region (% agreeing with propositions)

	EVEL	Regional assemblies	City-regions
North East	70	55	58
North West	72	53	59
Yorkshire/Humber.	71	56	60
West Midlands	71	50	57
East Midlands	75	50	50
East Anglia	72	52	49
South West	72	50	52
South East	72	50	53
Greater London	66	50	57
Sample size	3811	3703	3720

Note: 'Don't know' responses excluded; percentages weighted; sample size unweighted.

Source: [www.aog.ed.ac.uk/ data/assets/pdf file/0007/171493/Briefing -
England and the Process of Constitutional Change.pdf](http://www.aog.ed.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/171493/Briefing_-_England_and_the_Process_of_Constitutional_Change.pdf).

Table 2. Evaluation of how much time has been spent discussing how the UK is governed, by country (%)

	England	Scotland	N. Ireland	Wales
Too much	27	24	29	25
Right amount	29	27	25	25
Too little	44	48	46	50
Sample size	3285	1410	487	940

Note: 'Don't know' responses excluded; percentages weighted; sample size unweighted.

Source: [www.aog.ed.ac.uk/ data/assets/pdf file/0018/171108/Briefing -
Public Preferences and the Process of Constitutional Change.pdf](http://www.aog.ed.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/171108/Briefing_-_Public_Preferences_and_the_Process_of_Constitutional_Change.pdf).

Table 3. Spending Power of the GMCA Constituent Local Authorities, 2010/11 and 2015/16

Local authority	2010/11 Spending Power, £ million	2015/16 Spending Power, £ million	% change
Bolton	279.3	249.6	- 10.6
Bury	168.8	154.1	- 8.6
Manchester	623.2	511	- 18.0
Oldham	253.9	215.9	- 15.0
Rochdale	245.2	207.8	- 15.3
Salford	280	248.9	- 11.1
Stockport	255	243.2	- 4.6
Tameside	222.5	197.5	- 11.2
Trafford	185.6	172.4	- 7.1
Wigan	297.7	274.1	- 7.9

Source: Author calculations from Department for Communities and Local Government

(DCLG), Final local government finance settlement data.

Note: DCLG states that Spending Power measures the overall revenue funding available for local authority services, including Council Tax, locally retained business rates, and government grants.

¹ Full details of the research project can be found at

http://www.aog.ed.ac.uk/news/last_3_months6/presentations_and_briefings_from_new_research.

² HM Treasury and GMCA, 'Greater Manchester Agreement: devolution to the GMCA & transition to a directly elected mayor', November 2014, at

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/369858/Greater_Manchester_Agreement_i.pdf.

³ P. Apps, 'Manchester to benefit from 1.5bn of housing investment', *Inside Housing*, 22 April 2015.

⁴ 'Earn back' allows GM to be paid back up to £1.2 billion of investment in infrastructure improvements, if those investments have demonstrably increased growth. 'Earn back' is closely related to the idea of tax increment financing that has been used in a limited way in London and in some U.S. cities. See G. Bentley and L. Pugalis, 'New Directions in Economic Development: Localist Policy Discourses and the Localism Act', *Local Economy*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2013, pp. 257-74.

⁵ R. Johnstone, 'Manchester and Cambridge to keep 100% of business rate growth', *Public Finance*, 18 March 2015; R. Johnstone, 'Osborne scraps core grant and allows councils to keep business rates', *Public Finance*, 5 October 2015.

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