

DEVOLUTION

'Make your own mind up'

Do you want a West Yorkshire Mayor?

Recently Cabinet of the 5 Councils across West Yorkshire agreed to progress with public consultation on the West Yorkshire devolution deal and proposals for a directly elected Mayor. The consultation will start on Monday 25 May and run until 19 July 2020. It will provide people with the chance to have their say on how the implementation of the deal would work as well as sharing the proposals and ambitions.

People can take part in the consultation in the following ways:

Via the Combined Authority's dedicated consultation website:

www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/WYdevolution

Emailing wyconsultation@ipsos-mori.com

Sending a written response to the freepost address: **Freepost WY Devolution Consultation** Calling 0800 141 3657

Paper copies of the consultation will also be sent to a representative sample of people across West Yorkshire.

Alongside the consultation on the overall devolution deal, people are also invited to give their views through a consultation on the proposed devolution of the £63 million annual Adult Education Budget (AEB), which is a key element of the deal. This would see greater local control of how adult training is delivered in the region, ensuring it meets the needs of local residents, businesses and the West Yorkshire economy.

Further information on the AEB consultation is available at www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/AEB More information about the deal is also available at www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/devolution

Promotion of the consultation will be taking place regionally and at a local level. To help ensure that as many people in the Wakefield district as

possible have an opportunity to take part I am also asking for your help to promote the consultation to local residents and community groups when you go live on Monday. In addition to the information available via the web links above, I have also attached some frequently asked questions to help support you answer queries residents may have.

The consultation will be live from Monday 25 May.



What is devolution?

Devolution is about taking decisions as near as possible to where they will have an impact. As an example, it makes most sense for the Government in London to take decisions about defence but your local council will decide when your bins will be emptied. At the moment, a large proportion of decisions about what happens in Yorkshire are taken by the Government and its departments. Through a process known as 'devolution deals' the Government is giving areas more powers to make their own decisions on issues such as transport,

What is a devolution deal?

A devolution deal is a way groups of councils agree with Government to take greater control over funding for their area and take more major decisions, currently taken in London locally.

Who has agreed it?

The Leaders of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield have agreed a devolution deal with the Government. The deal will now be the subject of a public consultation and will be formally considered by each council before the legal measures necessary to put the deal into practice are taken.

What does this mean for people who live and work in the district?

This is a deal that guarantees long term funding that will allow us to invest in public transport, support business, improve skills and living standards while tackling the climate emergency. It will mean more of the decisions with major impacts on our region which are currently taken in London will be taken here. And it means being at the front of the queue for future powers and funding.

How will it work?

The five West Yorkshire councils already work together through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The devolution deal represents the next step forward in that partnership working. The biggest change will be the creation of a directly-elected Mayor who will take decisions with members of the Combined Authority.

What area will it cover?

The deal covers the West Yorkshire local authority areas with York remaining a non-constituent member of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Why do we need a Mayor?

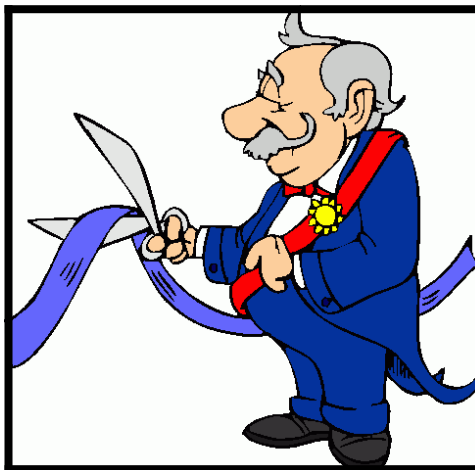
The mayor will be a metro mayor. Metro mayors work with combined authorities to exercise powers at a regional level. Through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, partner authorities already work together to make decisions at a regional level but Government believes the public should be able to directly elect a mayor to ensure accountability for the additional powers and funding made available through devolution deals.

What powers will the Mayor have?

The Mayor will chair the Combined Authority. Their specific powers will include the ability to set a precept on council tax and charge a business rate supplement subject to a ballot. They will also have transport powers including to draw up a local transport plan and implement bus franchising. It is expected the Mayor will assume powers currently exercised by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2024.

How would the Mayor be held to account?

The Mayor would be part of a Combined Authority with West Yorkshire council leaders who would all have a say in the decisions taken at a regional level. There would also be an Overview and Scrutiny process similar to that in place in local authorities. The Mayor would be responsible to voters and re-elected every four years.



Who will choose the Mayor?

The Mayor will be elected by the people of West Yorkshire.

When will the Mayor be elected?

The first mayoral election is expected to take place in May 2021. The Mayor's first term will run until 2024. After that they will serve four-year terms.

Why will it be called the West Yorkshire devolution deal?

The name reflects the area the Mayor's powers will cover and the communities that will elect them. York will continue to be a non-constituent member of the Combined Authority. We will continue to work with our neighbours in the Leeds City Region and support that brand which we know is highly valued by our business community, particularly in terms of attracting inward investment.

Will this cost more?

As part of the devolution deal, funding has been secured to meet the additional costs of the new arrangements. The Mayor will have limited tax-raising powers and will be accountable to the electorate for that decision and how that money is spent.

Will this mean more politicians?

The new arrangements will be similar to the existing West Yorkshire Combined Authority which draws the membership of its committees from the councillors in its partner authorities. The only additional political representative will be the Mayor and, from 2024, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

Isn't this just more bureaucracy?

Devolution is about reducing bureaucracy. By taking decisions closer to where they will have an impact we can reduce the lengthy processes involved with dealing with Government and secure better outcomes offering better value for money.

What does this mean for existing councils?

Councils will continue to have the responsibilities they do now, providing vital services to their communities and championing their towns, rural communities and cities. This is about moving powers and money from Whitehall to West Yorkshire for the benefit of all our communities.

Why are the police and crime commission part of this deal? What does this mean for the role of Police and Crime commissioner?

The creation of an elected Mayor creates the opportunity to transition the current PCC powers and structures while

maintaining the crucially important democratic accountability to local communities, similar to the Greater Manchester and London models.

The delay of the scheduled PCC election until May 2021, when the first West Yorkshire Mayor is also due to be elected, allows us to consider the feasibility of transferring the current PCC powers structures next year, rather than in 2024. This is being explored by the Combined Authority and the office of the PCC in consultation with the Home Office.

Does this mean bus franchising will go ahead?

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority was already considering the possible implications of bus franchising in anticipation that a devolution deal was

agreed. Metro-mayors have greater powers in this area but it remains a complex process. Any decision to go-ahead will be a matter for the Mayor and the Combined Authority

What is the alternative to agreeing this deal?

The devolution deal offers the region significant and secure funding to invest in better public transport, improving skills, supporting business, attracting jobs, protection from flooding and tackling the climate emergency. It also provides much greater freedom to take important decisions that impact on our communities. The alternative to the deal is uncertainty over future investment as current

funding comes to an end.

Why isn't devolution across the whole of Yorkshire an option?

We've made huge progress in convincing the Government about the benefits of working together at a Yorkshire-level to maximise the benefits of our global brand, coherent economy

and shared identity to deliver growth for our communities and the UK economy. The West Yorkshire Devolution Deal includes £200,000 funding to support the work of the Yorkshire Leaders Board.

Is now the right time to be consulting on the devolution deal?

This consultation process will be more challenging given the restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic but plans are in place to make it as accessible as possible. Delaying the consultation, and therefore the implementation of the deal with the powers and funding it unlocks, would hamper West Yorkshire's recovery and our ability to ensure all our communities receive the support they need in the years ahead.



Note :

If anyone wants any further information on this subject please contact us and we will try and help.

Stay Safe, Albert, Faith & Maureen

Contact Details

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