

Practical guide to the English Devolution Whitepaper

20 January 2025  Laura Hughes

The biggest change to local government organisation and governance in 30 years....a wholesale re-working of Government in England with a focus on regions and the local rather than the national.....a focus on elected leaders driving strategic change.

All these phrases and many more have been rolled out in response to the Government's publication of the [English Devolution White Paper, Power and Partnership: Foundations for Growth published in December 2024](#) (the 'White Paper').

Published just before Christmas, and with the Government welcoming expressions of interest by 10th January 2025, local government leaders had only 16 working days, over the Christmas period, to get to a place where they could submit initial proposals on either local government reorganisation needed to "unlock devolution", or on proposals for new strategic authorities (the new umbrella term for combined authorities and combined county authorities).

Many areas moved quickly to signal a desire to be in the Devolution Priority Programme, recognising that early adopters may fare better than those that choose to wait in terms of financial benefits and choices over factors like geography. On 5 February, the Secretary of State announced the six areas in the Priority Programme, and one area where local government reorganisation would be progressing ahead of devolution. The timetable for those areas is set, and it is demanding. For other areas, there is still a need to consider next steps around devolution and local government reorganisation.

We have updated [this practical guide](#) to take account of the announcement of the Priority Programme. It still provides practical tips for both groups about how to move forward at pace in this new world.

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Contact



Laura Hughes

Partner

laura.hughes@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)115 976 6582