

Billion pound devolution deal for West Yorkshire signed into law

In another major boost for the Northern Powerhouse, Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government Luke Hall today (29 January 2021) signed an Order bringing into law a historic devolution deal for West Yorkshire.

In a significant moment for local government in the region, the deal will pave the way for the creation of a new mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority.

The region will now elect its first ever mayor who will oversee an annual £38 million budget, new powers over transport, education and housing and regeneration, as well as control of the Adult Education Budget. In total, this means that the Mayoral Combined Authority will have access to over £1.1 billion to invest into the region. The Mayor of West Yorkshire will also become the region's Police and Crime Commissioner.

This marks a significant milestone in the government's devolution agenda, underlining its commitment to devolve money, resources and control away from Westminster.

Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government Luke Hall MP said:

Today represents a historic moment for West Yorkshire as we deliver a deal giving significant new powers and over a billion pounds of new funding to the region.

It will deliver real benefits to Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield, putting decision-making in the hands of these communities, driving the regional economy and creating new jobs for local people.

Getting this deal over the line is an important milestone in our ambitious levelling up agenda, moving power away from Whitehall empowering our regions to build back better.

Northern Powerhouse Minister Grant Shapps MP said:

We are investing billions to level up the North and build a strong and dynamic Northern Powerhouse. That must be backed by providing local leaders with the powers and means to make decisions.

I look forward to working with the first Mayor of West Yorkshire, both directly and through the Northern Transport Acceleration Council, to deliver the infrastructure upgrades communities want and deserve as quickly as possible.

Further information

Following the signing, the Order will come into force tomorrow (30 January).

The first Mayoral election is scheduled for 6 May 2021.

The first £38 million annual payment will be made later this year, the annual Adult Education Budget will be devolved from the start of the 2021/22 academic year and Police and Crime Commissioner functions will be transferred to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for exercise by the newly elected Mayor.

This is on top of further investment including: – £317 million from the Transforming Cities Fund – £101 million government funding for West Yorkshire flood risk management schemes – £25 million Heritage Fund – £3.2 million to support the development of housing sites across West Yorkshire – Up to £500,000 for the Bradford Station Masterplan and funding for the Outline Business Case for Leeds station redevelopment – £75,000 for a West Yorkshire Local Digital Skills Partnership

Details of the West Yorkshire deal

Policing

West Yorkshire is only the third region, after Greater Manchester and London, whose Mayor will become the region's Police and Crime Commissioner. The Mayor will be the public's voice on policing matters, set the police budget and will also be responsible for decisions around police property, rights and liabilities.

Education

West Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (WYCA) will take on many education functions for their area. They will establish targeted adult education provisions and manage their devolved adult education budget from 2021/22, helping boost economic growth.

Regeneration and housing

The deal provides significant powers to the Mayor and Combined Authority to improve the supply and quality of housing and facilitate the regeneration of West Yorkshire. Working closely with Homes England, the region will be able to promote housing and regeneration through new powers including on land acquisition and disposal.

The deal also gives the Mayor the power to designate mayoral development areas. This is the first step in establishing a Mayoral Development Corporation in the WYCA area.

Transport

The Mayor will have control over the region's transport budget, with the power to pay grants to the five constituent councils (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield) to improve and maintain roads. The Mayor will also be able to pay grants to bus service operators for eligible bus services operating within the region.