North East Devolution Consultation Report

March 2023

Durham County Council
Gateshead Council
Newcastle City Council
Northumberland County Council
South Tyneside Council
Sunderland City Council
North Tyneside Council

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1. Executive Summary

The leaders of County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland councils have agreed in principle to a devolution deal which the Government has confirmed it is 'minded to' approve.

A devolution deal for the region means unlocking £4.2 billion of investment, over 30 years, and seeing additional powers transferred from Whitehall to local people with better knowledge and experience of our communities.

It is expected to create 24,000 extra jobs, generate 70,000 courses to give people the skills to get good jobs and leverage £5.0 billion of private sector investment.

This deal represents a significant opportunity to make a real difference to people who live and work in the North East and will have a hugely positive impact on the big issues that matter to people.

Whether that is new and better paid jobs, more affordable housing or placing ourselves at the forefront of Net Zero revolution, the chance of more decision-making powers and millions of pounds in funding devolved to a new Mayoral combined authority for the North East will have a major impact on the North East.

The new authority, which would cover an area which is home to around 2 million people, will have the power to make decisions on areas such as transport, skills, housing, finance and economic development.

The deal includes:

- **An investment fund of £1.4bn, or £48m a year,** to support inclusive economic growth and support our regeneration priorities

- **An indicative budget of around £1.8bn, or £60m a year**, for adult education and skills – to meet local skills priorities and improve opportunities for residents

- **A £900m package of investment to transform our transport system**, with £563m from the City Regional Sustainable Transport Fund, on top of funding already announced for our buses and metro system

- **£69m of investment in housing and regeneration,** unlocking sites to bring forward new housing and commercial development

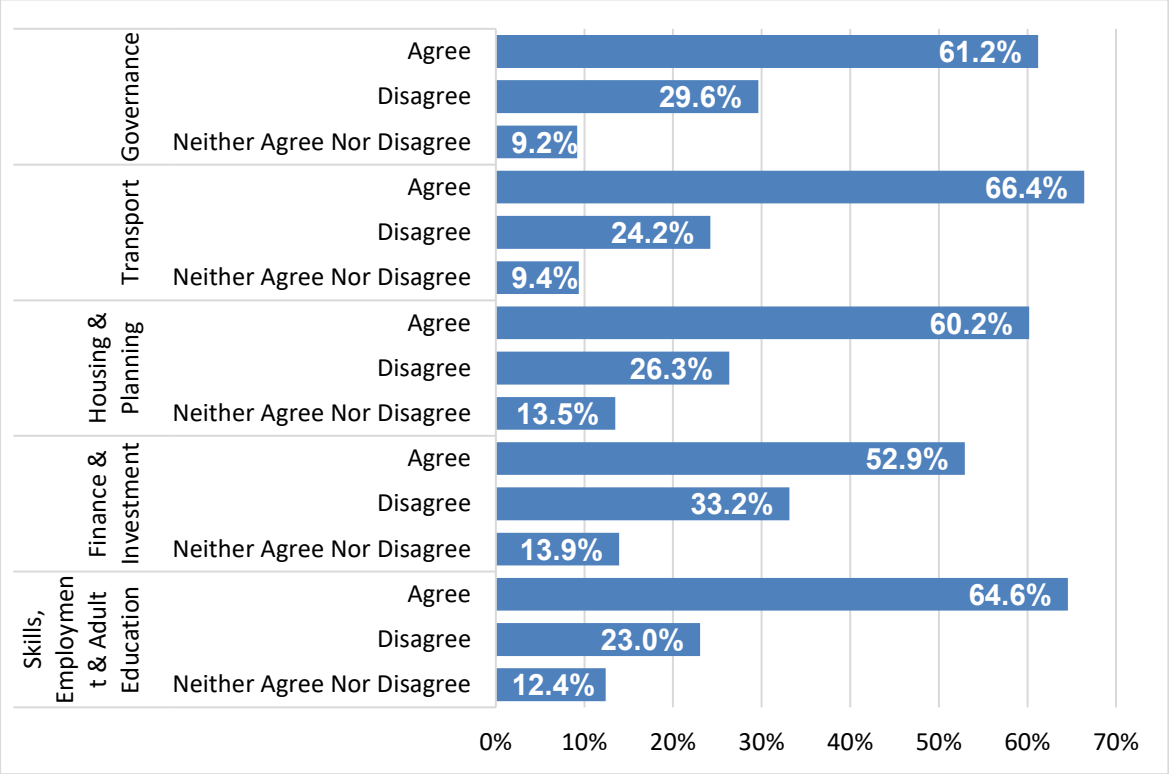
Local leaders have worked together to negotiate an offer which matches their ambition to make a difference for residents, communities and the economy.

A public consultation, which closed on 23rd March 2023, was a chance for residents, businesses and other stakeholders to understand and have their say about how the proposed devolution deal from government would be implemented in the region. This report outlines how the consultation was undertaken together with its findings.

Opportunities to take part in the consultation included the completion of surveys (via either online or paper based), attending an event or by submitting written comments.

In total, around 3,235 people or organisations took part in the consultation process, with 2,579 opting to complete an on-line or paper survey. An overview of responses across the five theme questions in the survey is shown in the table below.

Sentiment about the proposed devolution to North East Mayoral Combined Authority



Number of responses	Agree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree
Governance	1595	772	239
Transport	1731	631	244
Housing and Planning	1563	684	350
Finance and investment	1373	860	361
Skills, Employment and Adult Education	1673	597	321

2. Introduction

On 28th December 2022, the seven North East Authorities (Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council) agreed a “minded to” devolution deal with HM Government.

The devolution deal sets out £4.2bn of government investment, which will be subject to local decision making, enabling spend on local priorities, together with a range of devolved functions. The deal is subject to the creation of a new mayoral combined authority involving all of the seven North East authorities.

The deal is described as “minded-to” as the proposals are subject to public consultation, formal consent from each constituent council and parliamentary approval of the relevant legislation to implement the proposals.

In January 2023, the Cabinets of the seven local authorities approved a Governance Review – an analysis of existing arrangements to establish whether or not a new mayoral combined authority would be beneficial for the region – and a scheme – the document which sets out the terms of how the deal would be implemented.

A public consultation subsequently launched on 26th January and ran until 23rd March 2023. The outcomes from this consultation are set out in this report.

3. Consultation method and process

The approach used to undertake the consultation complied with Cabinet Office Consultation Principles. This approach gave consultees clear and concise information in order to respond to the consultation exercise (see Appendix A for more details about the questions that were asked).

The aim of the consultation was to provide the general public, the business and other key sectors and other stakeholders across the seven local authority areas with the opportunity to share their views on the proposals. The information provided to consultees focused on :

- changing how the seven councils work together
- devolution of powers to create an integrated transport system for the area
- devolution of new housing and planning functions
- new finance and investment powers
- devolution of matters relating to skills, employment and adult education

The consultation consisted of the following approaches (more details about how they were publicised can be found in Appendix B), delivery of which was informed by an equality impact assessment.

- **Survey**

  The survey, which was available both online and via paper copies, contained five closed-ended questions asking respondents whether they agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed or disagreed with the proposals.

  In addition, there were also six open-ended questions that provided respondents with the opportunity to provide more detailed views on the proposals if they wished to do so. As well as questions on the devolution proposals, both the online and paper survey questionnaires included nine demographic questions (see Appendix C for more information on who took part in the consultation).

  The online survey was available on each local authority's website and on the North of Tyne combined authority website. People were also able to submit their views by using a paper copy of the survey questionnaire, which was available in a range of public venues across the region. Finally, respondents could also submit their feedback via a letter or email.

  In total, 2,579 completed survey questionnaires were received.

- **Events**

Fifteen events also took place across the area. These mainly in person sessions allowed people to learn more about the proposed devolution deal and to ask questions. Paper copies of the consultation questionnaire, QR codes and links to the online consultation questionnaire were also provided at the events for those participants who wished to use them.

There was at least one event in each local authority area as set out below

- Northumberland County Council (six events[1] from 5 February – 22 March 2023)
- South Tyneside (13 February 2023)
- Durham (23 February 2023 and an on-line event 28 February 2023)
- Gateshead (28 February 2023 and an on-line event 9 March 2023)
- North Tyneside (8 March 2023)
- Sunderland (10 March 2023 and one for the Sunderland Deaf Society on 21 March 2023)
- Newcastle (13 March 2023 and one for the Newcastle Deaf Society 20 March 2023)

The events were publicised on all of the local authority and North of Tyne Combined Authority websites, social media and via the local media. Members of the public were offered the chance to attend by registering their details with the local authority hosting the event they wished to attend.

In total, 357 people attended the public consultation events as set out in table 1 below :

Table 1: Breakdown of consultation events by attendees

Local Authority	Attendees
Northumberland	93
South Tyneside	29
Durham	60
Gateshead	17
North Tyneside	43
Sunderland	45
Sunderland Deaf Society	12
Newcastle	50
Newcastle Deaf Society	11

[1] Members of the public attending events and meetings in Alnwick and Berwick, Castle Morpeth Local Area Council, Tynedale Local Area Council, Ashington and Blyth Local Area Council and Cramlington, Bedlington and Seaton Valley Local Area Council. ,

Each event consisted of a presentation which

- summarised the minded to devolution deal
- provided information on the Governance Review and the context for change
- explained the consultation process; and
- set out the next steps

This was then followed by discussions that focussed on gaining feedback from participants on the proposals and responding to any questions they had.

- **Stakeholder briefings**

In addition to the public events, nine bespoke on-line briefing events were held with key stakeholders. In total 263 people took part. The events were

- Regional Business Partners On-line Event (27 January 2023)
- Northumberland Energy Central Steering Group (27 January 2023)
- Regional Education Partners On-line Event (13 February 2023)
- Voluntary And Community Partners Event (15 February 2023)
- Voluntary Sector Organisations' Network North East Employment On-line Focus Group (16 February 2023)
- Transport Event (17 February 2023)
- North East Chamber County Meeting – Northumberland (8 March 2023)
- Northumberland Association of Local Councils (representing Town and Parish Councils) Briefing (9 March 2023)
- Northumberland Youth Cabinet and Youth Parliament Briefing (22 March 2023)

4. Response

This part of the report brings together the findings gathered from both the survey and the consultation events.

It should be noted that all questions in the survey were voluntary and not everybody completed all of the questions. This means that the total responses[2] to specific questions may not add up to the total number of overall respondents.

In addition to the closed-ended questions (i.e., where respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed, disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed), respondents were also asked open-ended questions to set out their reasons. The responses to the open-ended questions were coded to key themes. The top results per theme are included in this section. All the issues that were raised are included in Appendix D. It should be noted that, where figures are included, this is an indication of how many times the issue was raised.

Some respondents took the opportunity to state their views on an issue across more than one question. This means that some issues are often repeated across multiple questions. This was the case with regard to responses to the final open question which asked 'Are there any comments you would like to make that you do not feel you have addressed in your response so far?'. However all of the issues raised are highlighted in sections 4.1-4.5 and appendix D of this report.

In conducting surveys using closed and open-ended questions, it is commonly found that people who disagree with a proposition in the closed-ended question will be more likely to respond to the accompanying open-ended questions to explain their reasoning. This has generally been the case in this consultation.

[2] Please note "respondents' is used to describe the person/organisation that responded to the survey. The phrase "responses" is used to refer to the issues raised within each contribution. For example, one respondent may have commented on several issues within one contribution. This means that one respondent could be the author of more than one response.

4.1 Changing how councils work together

Summary

- The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals. These respondents felt the proposals made sense, would allow beneficial working together and bring more power to the region
- Those neither agreeing nor disagreeing suggested changes to, or clarity around the non-voting cabinet members, requested more information, or agreed in principle but had concerns, questions or caveats
- Those disagreeing felt the proposals would be unfair to some areas, would create additional bureaucracy, or lacked trust in local or national government

Figure 1: Do you agree or disagree with our proposals for the revised arrangements for the Combined Authority, as set out and in the Scheme, in particular the proposed arrangements for a Mayor, mayoral combined authority, and the councils, working together?

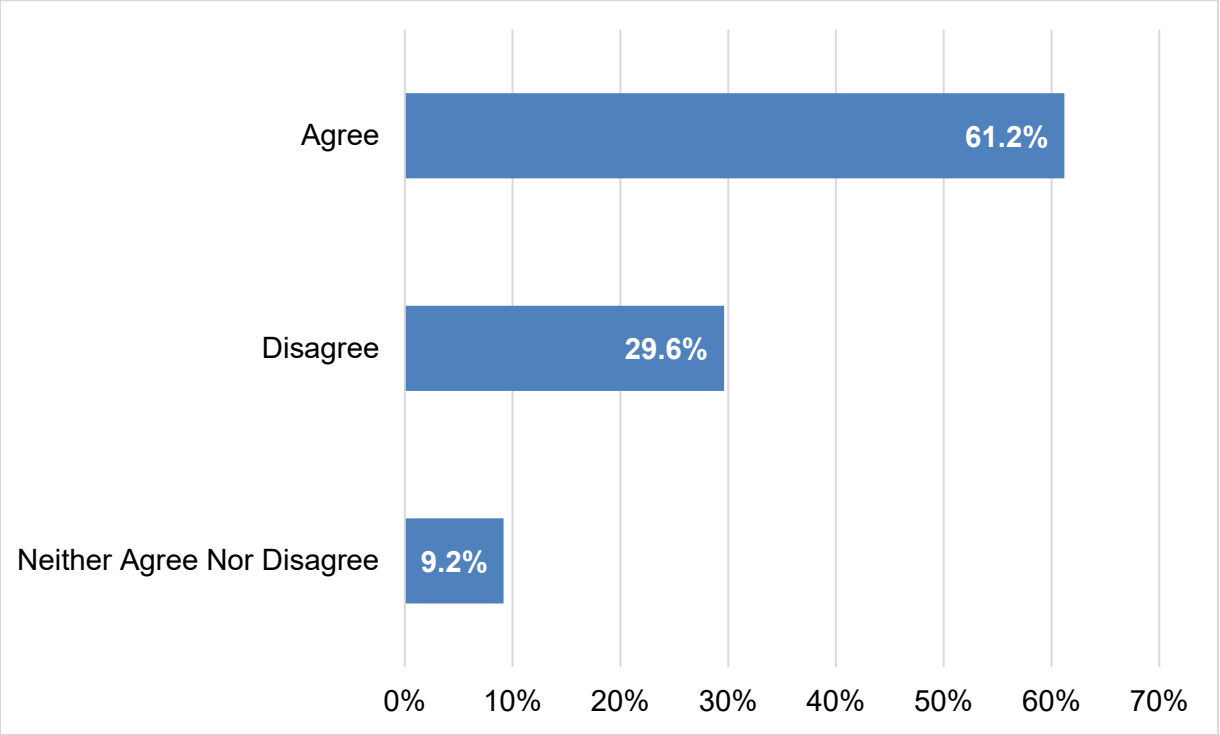


Figure 1, which is based on the data from the survey, shows the overall majority of people agreed with the proposals for the revised arrangements for the Combined Authority, as set out and in the Scheme, and the proposed arrangements for a Mayor, mayoral combined authority, and the councils, working together.

4.1.1 Feedback from the survey

Overall: 1,472 respondents to the on-line and paper questionnaires explained why they had either agreed, disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals. Their views are summarised below: (some respondents gave more than one reason and this is reflected in the totals shown below).

Agree: Those agreeing with the proposed changes believe:

- **The proposals make sense** (275 responses). These comments stated that the proposals make sense, will create efficiencies, increase resources, ensure a coordinated strategy and are the best option for the region.
- **The proposal will increase regional power** (218 responses). These comments welcomed the increased powers and local decision making the deal will bring and were positive about the role of the mayor and the higher profile they would help to create for the region.

Working together benefits the region (190 responses). These comments said the proposals were an opportunity for local authorities and stakeholder organisations to work together for the benefit of the region.

Disagree: of those who disagreed with the proposals the main reasons given were –

- **Lack of trust** (230 responses). These comments raised concerns that creation of the Combined Authority would result in the concentration of power in the hands of one person or a small group of people and the organisation being unaccountable. Lack of trust in politicians (locally and nationally), local authorities and the national government were also highlighted.
- **Additional bureaucracy** (226 responses). These comments said the proposals would result in an extra layer of bureaucracy with associated additional costs.
- **The creation of the Combined Authority would be unfair or detrimental to some areas** (179 responses). These comments said that implementation of the proposals would be unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas and County Durham. Concerns were also raised that Newcastle or larger places would unfairly benefit.

Neither agree nor disagree: Of those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals, their comments referred to –

- **Agreement in principle but with some concerns, questions or caveats** (79 responses). These comments were broadly in favour of the proposals but raised specific areas of concern, had questions or showed support for the proposals if one or more conditions were met.
- **A need for more information** (65 responses). These comments requested more information or details about the proposals and how they would be implemented.
- **Changes or clarity to the non-voting roles on the Cabinet of the Combined Authority** (59 responses). These comments asked for more representatives from the business and voluntary and community sectors, education or cultural sector representation, thought these representatives should have voting rights or wanted clarity about how they would be appointed.

4.1.2 Feedback from the consultation events

The issues raised at the consultation events were consistent with the responses from the survey.

However, a number of additional points were raised by small numbers of participants, across the region, including:

- engagement with town and parish councils
- the location of the headquarters for the Combined Authority
- how the impact of the Combined Authority will be evaluated including its social value and return on investment

4.2 Transport

Summary

- The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals. They felt it made sense for areas to work together under a regional transport strategy and with an integrated transport system
- Those neither agreeing nor disagreeing suggested priorities for improving transport or said they needed more information on the proposals
- Those disagreeing felt the proposals would be unfair to some areas, especially rural areas, or were opposed to having a mayor or the devolution deal

Figure 2: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to confer transport functions and new transport related functions to a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority?

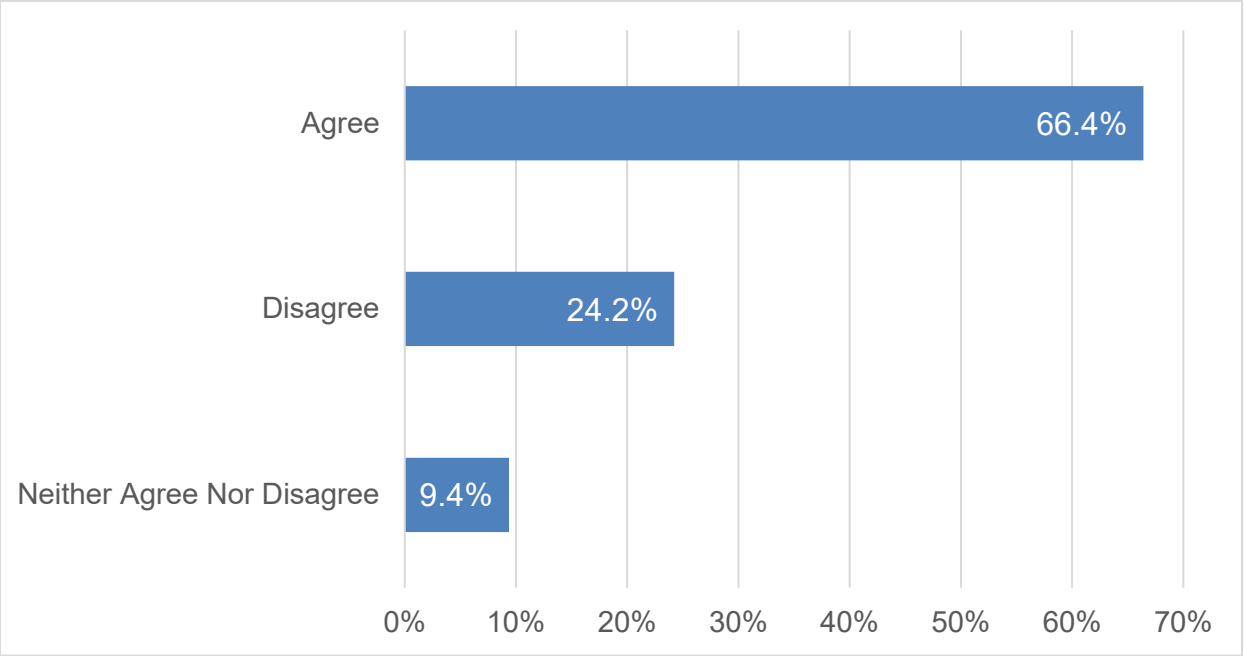


Figure 2, which is based on the data from the survey, shows that the overall majority of people agreed with the proposals to confer transport functions and new transport related functions to a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority.

4.2.1 Feedback from the survey

Overall: 1,350 respondents to the on-line and paper questionnaires explained why they had either agreed, disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals. Their views are summarised below: (some respondents gave more than one reason and this is reflected in the totals shown below).

Agree: The reasons given by those agreeing with the proposed changes, showed they believe

- **The region needs an integrated transport system** (174 responses). These comments said it was important to have an integrated transport system, with different modes of transport working together, including ticketing.
- **Working together as a region makes sense** (156 responses). These comments said it made sense for areas to work together, with a regional approach or strategy for transport.
- **The proposals were an opportunity to improve transport in the region** (135 responses). These comments said the proposals were an opportunity to improve transport, particularly public transport. Many of the comments referred to poor services which people felt needed to be improved.

Disagree: of those who disagreed with the proposals the main reasons given were –

- **It would be unfair or detrimental to some areas** (148 responses). These comments said the proposals would be unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas. Some comments referred to the area included in the proposals being too large or diverse.
- **Not wanting a North East Mayor or concentration of power** (62 responses). These comments said they did not want a North East Mayor or the concentration of power in the hands of one person or a small group of people.
- **It would not lead to improvements** (53 responses). These comments said the proposals would not improve transport in the region. Many of the comments said bringing together local authorities that had been unable to address transport problems or had made things worse or would not change anything.
- **Opposition to the devolution deal** (52 responses). These comments were opposed to the North East devolution deal, with many referring to the result of the 2004 devolution referendum or wanting to keep the existing arrangements.

Neither agree nor disagree: Of those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals, their comments referred to –

- **Suggested priorities to improve transport** (30 responses). These comments suggested priorities for improving transport, including creating dual lanes along the full length of the A1, better public transport and extending the Metro system to more areas.
- **A need for more information** (23 responses). These comments said they needed more information on or details of the proposals and how they would be implemented.
- **Conditional support** (20 responses). These comments said they would support the proposals if one or more conditions were met. These included the proposals leading to better, cheaper public transport, efficiencies or being fair to all areas.

4.2.2 Feedback from the consultation events

The issues raised at the consultation events were consistent with the responses from the survey.

4.3 Housing and planning

Summary

- The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals. These respondents felt that housing decisions in the North East were best decided by local people

- Of particular merit was the potential for the development of new affordable and social housing

- Those neither agreeing nor disagreeing were concerned with corruption, fairness and accountability or said they needed more information on the proposals

- Those disagreeing felt the proposals would be unfair to some areas, especially rural areas, or were opposed to having a new mayor or combined authority

Figure 3: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to confer housing functions and new housing related functions to a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority?

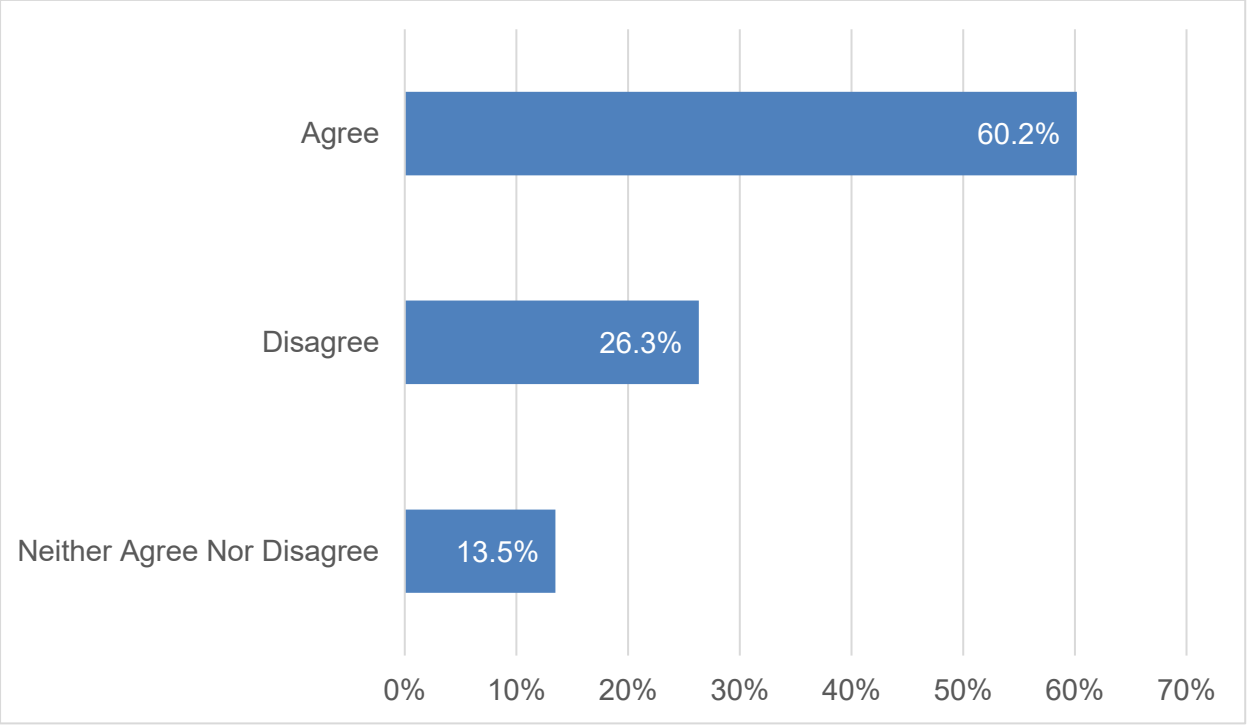


Figure 3, which is based on the data from the survey, shows that the overall majority of people agreed with the proposals to confer housing functions and new housing related functions to a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority.

4.3.1 Feedback from the survey

Overall: 1,226 respondents to the on-line and paper questionnaires explained why they had either agreed, disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals. Their views are summarised below: (some respondents gave more than one reason and this is reflected in the totals shown below).

Agree: The reasons given by those agreeing with the proposed changes, showed they believe

- **The region needs an integrated housing approach** (104 responses). These respondents said it was important to have an integrated housing strategy, with a combined approach to issues impacting the North East
- **The provision of more affordable and social housing** (100 responses). Respondents believed that the proposals would be an impetus for the building of more affordable and social housing, something that was seen to be very much needed
- **Local people are best placed to make local decisions (**90 responses). Respondents welcomed the prospect of having the power to control budgets and make decisions locally, as opposed to in Westminster
- **Environmental sustainability and the protection of green belts** (63 responses). Respondents said the proposals were an opportunity to improve environmentally sustainability within housing. Many were concerned with Net Zero targets and the protection of green belts

Disagree: of those who disagreed with the proposals the main reasons given were –

- **Not wanting a North East Mayor or concentration of power** (141 responses). These comments said they did not want a North east Mayor or the concentration of power in the hands of one person or a small group of people
- **It would be unfair or detrimental to some areas** (105 responses). These respondents said the proposals were unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas. Some comments referred to the area included in the proposals being too large or diverse

- **Housing to remain under the control of individual authorities** (54 responses). These comments were opposed to the North East devolution deal, with many wanting to keep the existing arrangements
- **Environmental sustainability and the protection of green belts** (41 responses). These respondents said the proposals would not improve environmental sustainability in the region. Many of the respondents were concerned that green belts would not be protected and that new properties would be substandard in terms of sustainability.

Neither agree nor disagree: Of those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals, their comments referred to –

- **Conditional support** (67 responses). These respondents said they would support the proposals if one or more conditions were met. These included the proposals leading to the provision of more affordable and social housing, environmental sustainability and a consistent approach to housing strategy within the region
- **A need for more information** (46 responses). These respondents said they needed more information on or details of the proposals and how they would be implemented
- **It would be unfair or detrimental to some areas** (25 responses). These comments said the proposals could be unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas. Some comments referred to the area included in the proposals being too large or diverse

4.3.2 Feedback from the consultation events

The issues raised at the consultation events were consistent with the responses from the survey.

However, a number of additional points were raised by small numbers of participants, including:

- The need to support innovation

4.4 Finance and investment

Summary

- Just over half of respondents agreed with the proposals. They believe it will create opportunities and improvement for the region as decisions can be better made locally by people who 'know' the area
- Those neither agreeing nor disagreeing suggested they need more information about the deal to make an informed opinion. They also raised concerns about possible increased costs to local people to fund the deal
- Those disagreeing felt the proposals would increase costs to local people and the distribution of funding would be unfair. It was also suggested that the deal is a waste of money and undemocratic

Figure 4: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to confer additional finance functions on a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority?

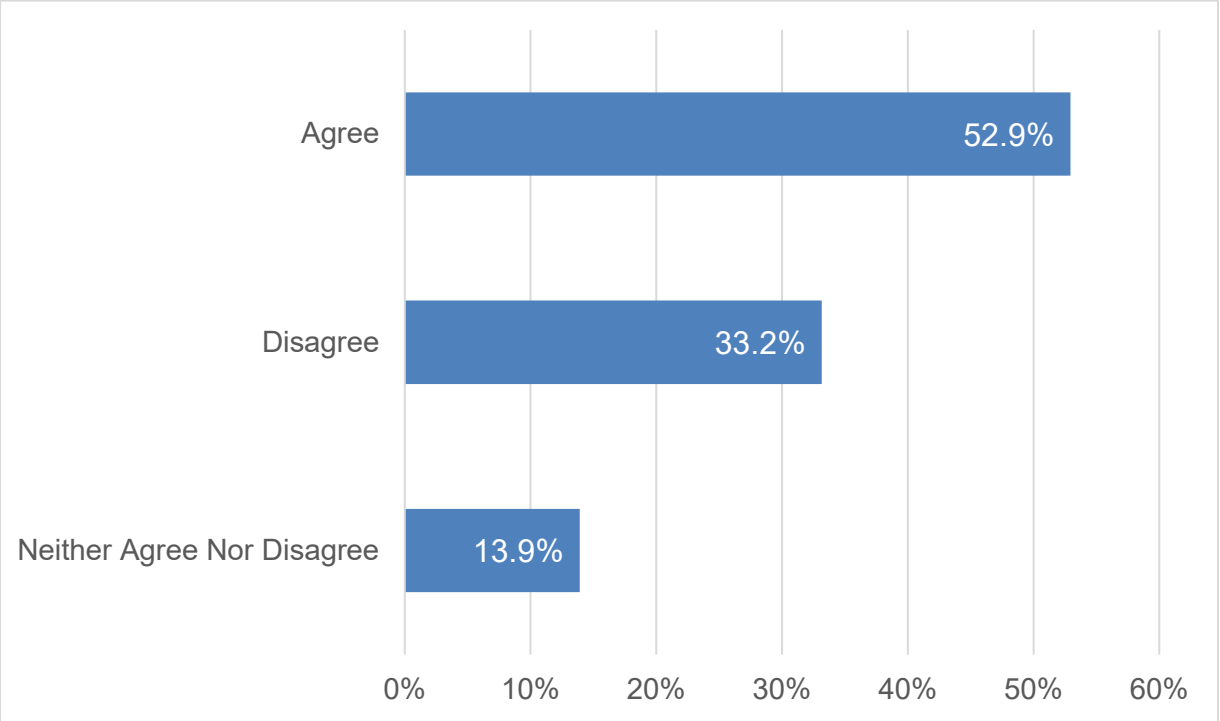


Figure 4, which is based on the data from the survey, shows that just over half of respondents agreed with the proposals to confer additional finance functions on a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority.

4.4.1 Feedback from the survey

Overall: 1,132 respondents to the on-line and paper survey explained why they had either agreed, disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals. Their views are summarised below: (some respondents gave more than one reason and this is reflected in the totals shown below).

Agree: The reasons given by those agreeing with the proposed changes, demonstrated their belief that the proposals will:

- **Lead to long-term investment that will create opportunities and improvement in the region** (110 responses). These comments suggested that devolution would attract strategic long-term investment that would improve the region by creating better infrastructure (e.g., transport) and opportunities for employment, thereby helping to close the North / South divide

- **Result in fair distribution of funds** (63 responses). These comments agreed that devolution would be positive for the region as long as the finances were distributed evenly across the area without the need for a rise in council tax or other costs to local people

- **Support better decisions based on local knowledge** (53 responses). These comments believe that devolved finances will allow better decisions to made by local representatives who 'know' the area better than Whitehall

- **Ensure transparency and accountability** (32 responses). These comments agreed with the idea of devolution but wanted reassurance about the transparency and accountability of decision making

Disagree: of those who disagreed with the proposals the main reasons given were:

- **It would increase costs to local people** (244 responses). These comments said the proposals were unfair as it would inevitably mean more costs for local people in order to fund the new Mayor's activities and result in higher council tax

- **Concerns with distribution** (60 responses). These comments suggested that devolution would bring an unequal distribution of funds with the bigger city areas getting a higher proportion of resources compared to more rural areas

- **Bureaucracy** (39 responses). These comments said that devolution would create more bureaucracy which would inhibit delivery
- **Waste** (38 responses). These comments were opposed to the North East devolution deal, with respondents suggesting the deal is a waste of money and things should be kept as they are
- **Undemocratic** (30 responses). These comments highlighted a belief that the process for agreeing a devolution deal is undemocratic as a referendum has not been held

Neither agree nor disagree: Of those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals, their comments referred to:

- **They did not understand the proposals** (39 responses). These comments suggested respondents did not understand the proposals and that more information was needed to make an informed decision about whether or not the devolution deal would be beneficial
- **Concerns with increased costs** (36 responses). These comments said they were not sure about the devolution deal and were concerned that it may lead to increased costs for local people, including higher council tax

4.4.2 Feedback from the consultation events

The issues raised at the consultation events were consistent with the responses from the survey.

However, a number of additional points were raised by small numbers of participants, including:

- the impact of inflation on the funds provided by central government.
- the nature of the formula for allocating funds across the area.
- whether there will be formal fiscal devolution including revenue raising powers
- the need to fund existing businesses as well as those that are new, incoming businesses or currently prioritised sectors such as green and digital

4.5 Skills, Employment and Adult Education

Summary

- The majority of respondents agreed with the proposals. They felt it made sense for areas to work together and integrate with local education providers and businesses
- Most of those neither agreeing nor disagreeing said they needed more information on the proposals
- Those disagreeing felt that a combined authority was the wrong geographical area in which to make these decisions or that some areas would be poorly served, particularly rural areas or County Durham

Figure 5: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to confer skills, employment and adult education functions to a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority?

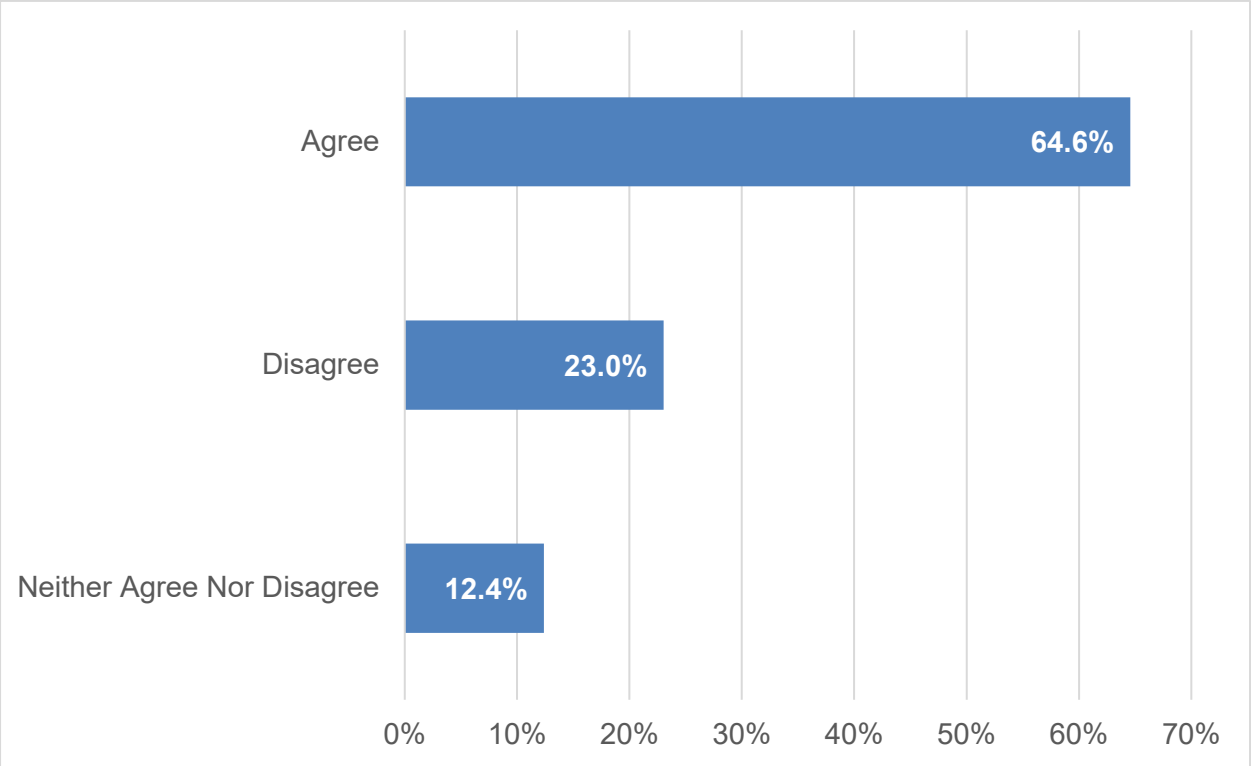


Figure 5, which is based on the data from the survey, shows that the overall majority of people agreed with the proposals for skills, employment and education.

4.5.1 Feedback from the survey

Overall: 863 respondents to the on-line and paper questionnaires explained why they had either agreed, disagreed, or neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals. Their views are summarised below:(some respondents gave more than one reason and this is reflected in the totals shown).

Agree: Among those respondents agreeing with the proposals and who offered further information the following key themes are seen:

- **Skills and training should be delivered at the NEMCA level.** (327 responses). Respondents felt that national delivery was too out of touch with local needs and/or local authority level delivery was too small to be efficient or lacked synergies. Integration with other partners was often felt to be enhanced at this geographic level, as was efficient use of funding
- **Agree with the proposals but with some caveats.** (108 responses). Respondents felt that apprenticeships should be included in scope; governance should include education providers and businesses and funding should be shared fairly across local authorities
- **Increase in funding welcomed.** (43 responses). These respondents only cited the extra funding available

Disagree: of those who disagreed with the proposals the main reasons given were –

- **NEMCA is too large an area for skills planning and delivery** (95 responses). These respondents felt that Local Authorities were best placed to deliver these proposals
- **Concerns around governance** (79 responses). These comments said these respondents did not want a North East Mayor; or were worried about the concentration of power in the hands of one person or a small group of people; many expressed distrust of politicians in general or noted that these proposals had not been subject to a referendum
- **NEMCA was too small an area for skills planning and delivery** (39 responses). Respondents stated that the proposed activities were best coordinated and funded at a national level
- **Felt the proposals would not work** (38 responses). These respondents stated that the proposed activities would not achieve improvements within NECMA. Often citing insufficient funding or inadequate scope

- **Unfair or detrimental to some areas** (32 responses). These comments said the proposals would be unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas or specific local authorities

Neither agree nor disagree: Of those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposals, their comments referred to –

- **A request for more information** (87 responses). These respondents wanted further information to help them form an opinion either about skills training in the region or the devolution proposals. Others wanted to understand more about how funding would be shared fairly between local authorities
- **Will not improve** (22 responses). These respondents felt that these proposals would have no impact
- **Should be a wider scope** (17 responses). A variety of levels of activity were offered including that proposals should include Higher Education; higher level qualifications; lower-level qualifications or schools

4.5.2 Feedback from the consultation events

The issues raised at the consultation events were consistent with the responses from the survey.

However, a number of additional points were raised by small numbers of participants, including:

- the impact the new arrangements would have on the current post-16 procurement rocess
- education provision for the deaf community

5. Views from Stakeholders

Business

- **Advance Northumberland:** is an economic growth and inward investment company, wholly owned by Northumberland County Council. It submitted a letter of support for the North East Mayoral Combined Authority Devolution.

  The letter offers a commitment to help devolution achieve benefits for Northumberland and the wider region.

  It also says devolution will stimulate and accelerate economic growth and job creation opportunities and help shape Northumberland for the benefit of residents.

- **Bionow:** is a not-for-profit specialist business development and services company serving the biomedical and life science sector across the North of England. It has over 320 members and direct links to approximately 1,300 life science organisations across the North of England, employing more than 50,000 people.

  It believes that strong engagement between regional and local authorities and the sector is crucial to a vibrant life sciences sector and that other devolved authorities have a positive impact on the local and regional ecosystem in developing the skills, investment and infrastructure needed for the region and the sector to thrive. They therefore support the devolution deal and look forward to the positive impacts.

- **Confederation of British Industry (CBI)** responded on behalf of businesses, higher and further education providers, and regional institutions. The response is endorsed by the CBI North East Regional Council.

  The region's business community overwhelmingly support a devolution deal involving all seven local authorities. A single Mayoral Combined Authority would be an opportunity to deliver cohesive, integrated regional change, reflective of the local economic and political geography.

  In addition to broadly agreeing with all five policy proposals, CBI members are pleased that the principles across each policy area meet the ambitions of the CBI Seize the Moment framework.

  The response also contains requests for the proposed North East Mayoral Combined authority on each of the policy areas set out in the consultation. These include a robust partnership with North East business, long-term strategies for

transport and business investment, a simplified regional planning system and partnerships to deliver a skills programme that services regional demands.

- **Dynamo North East:** are the region's tech sector membership body with over 130 members. They advocate for the needs of businesses and learners and work to develop and deliver programmes that underpin the success of the digital economy. Dynamo are delighted to support the proposed North East Devolution Deal on behalf of the tech sector, which they explain has a crucial role to play in driving the innovation economy and jobs underpinning growth and shared prosperity in the North East and across the UK.

- **Federation of Small Businesses (FSB):** confirm their support for the North East devolution deal and welcome the agreement that this will cover the seven local authority areas and will deliver significant benefits to the region.

  The FSB agree with the policy proposals in the devolution consultation. They say the continued role of the Local Enterprise Partnership is welcome, but it is essential to broaden the scope of the proposed Mayoral Combined Authority's Business Board to include the voice of small business through the inclusion of business representatives. They feel it is essential that small businesses and representative bodies are consulted in the design and development of skills support programmes.

- **Institute of Directors:** support the proposed North East Devolution deal as the deal will help directors across the North East to fulfil the mission to build a better world.

  The Institute of Directors say transferring powers from Whitehall to local people with detailed knowledge and experience of the region, people and communities will create a better environment for business.

  They feel a chronic and systemic skills shortage is holding back business growth and the devolution deal promises to address this by providing funding to train local people to meet the skills priorities of the Institute of Directors' members.

- **Nissan:** sees the creation of the new combined authority as a positive development that will support the future success of the business and help to attract future inward investment opportunities. It believes that the creation of a directly elected mayor will provide strategic direction and act as a strong champion for the region.

  The company recognises that the Authority's ability to allocate funding for skills, infrastructure, innovation, transport, regeneration and housing will support

Nissan's ambition to enhance its investment in the region, to reskill and upskill its workforce, and to export more electrified vehicles.

In particular they: welcome the deal's commitment to investing in electric vehicle infrastructure and look forward to engaging with the combined authority on its 'Institute of Future Mobility' initiative; recognise that similar skills are needed for the manufacture of both vehicle and off-site modular housing and wish to explore opportunities for regional collaboration with NEMCA; want to work closely with the combined authority and partners to develop a business case for forming an industrial cluster to support the growth of low emission manufacturing across the region; and would like to explore further the development of a new skills facility to support the development of advanced manufacturing skills.

- **North East Business and Innovation Centre (BIC):** gives its unreserved support to the proposal to create the devolution deal and is looking forward to seeing significant powers transferred to the North East from central government. The BIC highlights that as well as bringing multi-billion-pound investment into the area, allowing it to work together ever more closely, 24,000 extra, good jobs will be created and tens of thousands of local people supported with increased skills to fill them.

  BIC believes the deal will give businesses more confidence to invest and the anticipated £5bn of private sector investment will be transformational. It concludes the scale of the opportunity the deal presents cannot be over-estimated and is massively to be welcomed and that this feeling is echoed by many others in the business community.

- **North East of England Chamber of Commerce (NEECC):** express support for the North East devolution deal. NEECC members see the area of the seven local authorities included in the deal as a coherent economic area. They believe the proposed North East Mayoral Combined Authority would enable more collaborative working across the region and help it speak to government with a unified voice. They say there is also the potential to promote greater equality and spread the benefits of growth more equally which would enable more local businesses to flourish.

  The NEECC support the policy proposals set out in the North East devolution consultation, including the creation of a Business Board. However, feel it is important that any new governance arrangements do not create added complexity for individuals and organisations engaging with the public sector and that the Mayoral Combined Authority is easy to do business with. Careful allocation and monitoring of the proposed investment fund and any subsequent funding will be vital to ensure it had the maximum positive impact for local people and

communities. The NEECC would also welcome a commitment to procure from local firms wherever possible.

- **North East Enterprise Agency (NEEAL):** is a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee, and special purpose vehicle that champions enterprise support and provides a single service to anyone starting a new business or in their early stages of growth. Over the last two years it has supported the establishment of over 5,500 businesses and supported nearly 16,000 to develop and grow.

  NEEAL offers its unreserved support to the proposal to create a devolution deal. It believes that the North East has long lagged behind a lot of the rest of the UK in terms of both its business stock and the number of new businesses created here. They feel this deal, when implemented, will see significant powers transferred to the region, together with a multi-billion-pound investment that will create the conditions to drive a more entrepreneurial culture and, as a result, significantly increase the level of new business activity.

  NEEAL believes that having the ability to exercise control over such key economic levers as transport, skills, housing, finance and economic development will give the region's two million residents real power over the decisions which affect their everyday lives and the economic wellbeing of the area. It will give businesses more confidence to invest and residents more confidence to set up businesses and as a result has the capacity to be truly transformational. It concludes that 'the scale of the opportunity which this presents cannot be over-estimated and is massively to be welcomed.'

- **North East Local Enterprise Partnership** (LEP): The Board of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) confirms its strong support for the progress made towards devolution in the region, as expressed in this deal and welcomes the policy proposals set out in the consultation. The LEP welcome the deal for its content and opportunity to deepen devolution in the region in the future. They welcome the agreement covers the area of the seven local authorities.

  The LEP look forward to working with partners to form the new Mayoral Combined Authority. It is strongly committed to playing its role as the new Business Advisory Board and facilitating a business voice to provide advice and support to the Mayor and Cabinet. It is important to include leaders from education, who have been a critical pillar of their current partnership.

- **Sunderland Empire and Sunderland Culture**: strongly welcome the proposed arrangements for the North East Mayoral Combined Authority, and ask that

consideration be given to representation of the creative and cultural sector on advisory boards.

They highlight the role that cultural infrastructure can play as a catalyst for regeneration, inclusive economic growth and community development, and would like the cultural sector to benefit from the Investment Fund, particularly with regard to infrastructure and workforce development.

- **Sunderland Software City:** is a not-for-profit company driving the tech economy in the North East, supported the proposed North East Devolution deal. It believes the deal would help unlock opportunities to grow the tech sector and ensure more businesses, people and communities across the region could share in its success.

  They believe the deal provides a strong basis on to drive forward the tech ecosystem in the North East, ensuring businesses across the region are able to benefit from digital innovation and it will enable government, industry and local partners to work together to support the skills and talent base of the region's communities.

  They say the devolution deal will help raise aspirations, encouraging more people in the region to consider tech employment and starting up businesses. Understanding and reacting to local need is vital to a flourishing tech ecosystem and local empowerment to support inclusive growth and skills would produce this.

- **Taylor Wimpey:** agree with the proposals for the North East Combined Authority (NEMCA) and believe that collaborative working between the constituent councils is key for securing and maximising the long-term prosperity of the region. They believe appropriate resources and political backing should be made available to the NEMCA Mayor from the outset and clear conflict management and resolution procedures should be established.

  Taylor Wimpey supports the proposal to confer transport functions to the NEMCA. They say Local Transport Plans should be closely aligned with the NEMCA's growth plans and there should be a transport and growth working group including all key stakeholders.

  Taylor Wimpey generally supports the proposals to confer housing and planning functions from government to the NEMCA. However, new acquisition powers should be directed to areas where the market was failing and the possibility of a single Spatial Development Strategy for the NEMCA area should be explored.

Taylor Wimpey had no specific comments on the additional finance functions in the devolution deal but welcome the investment from the government in the North East region.

Taylor Wimpey agree that employment and adult education functions should be conferred to the NEMCA. It supports the commitment to produce Local Skills Improvement Plans and the recognition of the challenges facing the North East employment market. They believe Local Skills Improvement Plans need to highlight the range of skilled jobs in the house building and construction industry. They say there is also a need to ensure consistency between local education institute offerings and the skills and knowledge required by the North East employment market. Taylor Wimpey would welcome any future engagement with the NEMCA on adult education, employment and skills.

- **TEDCO Business Support Ltd:** offer unreserved support for the North East devolution deal. They say the North East has long failed to keep pace with the rest of the UK in terms of its business stock and the number of new businesses created. The devolution deal would potentially bring multi-billion-pound investment into the region which would create conditions that would drive a more entrepreneurial culture and significantly increase the level of new business activity.

Trade Unions

- **Trades Union Congress**: looks forward to working with NEMCA and supports the transfer of government functions to the combined authority. It welcomes the proposal for NEMCA to have non-voting members and asks that trades unions be represented. They would also like to see the creation of additional advisory boards to cover transport, education and skills, housing, public service provision and Net Zero, and broadening of the Inclusive Economy Board remit.

  The creation of a co-ordinated transport body for the region would be welcomed. While the TUC support bus franchising as an interim measure, they aspire to public ownership of bus services. Additional proposals made by the TUC include: housing stock to be improved through retro-fitting, increased collaboration with the TUC on learning and skills funding, that the Adult Education Budget prioritise disadvantage groups, and the combined authority apply good employment principles to the delivery of its work agenda.

- **UNISON:** is in principle supportive of devolution, however feel that the North East devolution deal presents some issues.

UNISON is keen to see strengthened accountability and democratic processes and does not want to see individual local council roles eroded to consolidate powers in a single individual.

UNISON is also concerned that the deal omitted workforce issues, health inequalities, police and fire services, the role of communities and trade unions and promoting equality and diversity. It is also concerned about the level of funding in the deal and this being subject to five-yearly gateway assessments.

UNISON would like to see greater community engagement before any deal is finalised and applauds the work done to get the deal to this point. Provided its concerns are addressed, UNISON supports a devolved future for the North East and hopes to be able to work with government, the Mayor and the constituent councils.

Community and Voluntary Sector:

- **Children North East (CNE):** welcome the North East Devolution Deal as a potential major stepping stone towards improving the lives of babies, children and young people in the region. They believe that it presents a huge opportunity to join up regional infrastructure and provision to enable all babies, children and young people to grow up happy and healthy.

  It particularly welcomes the transport investment and devolved powers to design and manage transport services around the needs of local people. They highlight the need for frequent, affordable, reliable public transport and safe walking and cycling routes and think integrated ticketing is a potential 'game-changer.' The organisation also wants to ensure that the voices of young people and low-income families are heard in the refresh of the Regional Transport Plan.

  CNE believe that increased planning powers at a regional level has the potential to bring in investment and ensure planning decisions reflect the needs of the community. They hope this might be a catalyst for building more social housing and genuinely affordable family homes close to amenities and public transport.

  They are delighted that the deal becomes the first in the country to contain a specific commitment to addressing child poverty and look forward to continued collaboration in the North East leading the way to prevent and tackle child poverty.

  CNE urge that regional integration does not result in centralisation if this moves opportunities out of local communities and makes them harder to access for people dependent on public transport or trying to balance caring responsibilities.

Similarly, they would not want financial powers granted to the NECMA to result in an additional financial burden on struggling families. The charity would therefore welcome any future opportunities to work with NECMA to make the voices of babies, children and young people they work with heard, and ensure decision-making keeps children, particularly those growing up in poverty, at their heart.

Education

- **Durham University:** welcomes the North East devolution deal, which would bring together the economic strengths of County Durham with that of the broader North East region. It would also enable Durham University to support the business and skills agenda more readily within the region and enable collaboration with other universities in the region to deliver innovation support, including the 'Inclusive Innovation Deal' programme identified in the draft devolution document.

  Given the critical importance of the regional universities in delivering an economic transformation, it asks that consideration be given to representation of the sector on the Business Board or at the immediate decision-making level below – an appropriate nominee within the Business Board with an expanded remit.

- **Newcastle College Group (NCG):** support over 30,000 learners and employing over 2,000 people across a network of seven colleges and wishes to show support for the creation of a North East Mayoral Combined Authority.

  It states that with responsibility for skills and funding already moving towards a regional system to ensure the skills needs of local areas are met, a devolved government would mean the Adult Education Budget (AEB) would now lie completely with the North East Mayoral Combined Authority. NCG hope this will offer more flexibility, as the proposed combined authority would have a much clearer understanding of local needs and demands.

  NCG conclude that if approved, the devolution deal could provide a significant opportunity for them to work closely with employers across the area and collaborate with other local education providers. They therefore offer their full support for the deal and look forward to working with the combined authority for the benefit of its local communities.

- **Newcastle University:** is pleased to see that the proposed North East devolution deal includes areas in which it had strengths in research and innovation. Key among these are sustainable transport and net zero, inclusive economic growth, longevity, addressing inequalities and education and skills. These are areas

where it already enjoys strong collaborations with partner organisations and universities in the region.

Devolution is an opportunity to build on and further develop these collaborations, drive up productivity and deliver real impact for everyone in the region as well as at a national and global level.

The university therefore strongly supports the formation of the proposed North East Mayoral Combined Authority, which will benefit residents, communities and the region's social, cultural and economic prosperity into the future.

- **Northumbria University:** fully supports the North East devolution deal and the creation of a North East Mayoral Combined Authority.

  They say the greater powers and funding to be devolved to the North East have the potential to make a huge impact on the region's communities and businesses and the university recognised the opportunity devolution gave to deliver coordinated and inclusive economic growth.

  Northumbria University is keen to build on the North East's strong track record of regional collaboration and innovation and play a role in helping to jointly unlock new jobs, skills, economic development and investment. It is keen to work with the proposed North East Mayoral Combined Authority to enable more people in the region to access opportunities through employment and education that met the skills needs of the region's economy.

- **Regional Universities Business and Engagement (RUBE) Group:** brings together the North East's universities, focusing on opportunities for collaboration to strengthen the region's economy.

  The RUBE Group welcome the proposed North East devolution deal and strongly support the formation of the proposed North East Mayoral Combined Authority. Adopting this governance model would benefit the region's residents, communities and social, cultural and economic prosperity.

  It is particularly pleased that the deal included areas in which the universities had strengths in innovation and skills. Key among these were sustainable energy, health and life sciences, data and digital culture and creative arts. These are areas where the universities enjoyed strong collaborations with partner organisations in the region.

  Devolution is an opportunity to build on and further develop these important collaborations, drive up productivity and deliver real impact for everyone in the region, as well as at a national and global level.

- **Tyne Coast College:** support the devolution deal and are very excited to work together with the proposed combined authority to create jobs and courses that will enable people to thrive in the local economy.

  As a key stakeholder, they wholeheartedly support the devolution deal and support the vision to create 24,000 extra jobs and the flexibility of offering education and training that meets local needs. The college also recognises the benefits of a united vision for the area and believes that a devolved funding system would enable a fairer delivery of qualifications in a responsive, flexible and agile way, with a key focus on positive outcomes for learners, leading to sustained employment.

- **University of Sunderland:** strongly supports the proposal for a North East devolution deal and the opportunity it presented to improve productivity and reduce disparities within the region.

  It is working with the NHS and city partners to develop the Sunderland Health Innovation Zone and hope the deal will provide local leadership with the powers and access to funding and investment incentives to build on and progress this important work.

  A deal that attracts new businesses and international investment into the city and supports them thorough developing the skills base they needed to succeed and grow would be 'game changing' for Sunderland, the North East and the UK.

Sport and Culture:

- **Active Partnership for County Durham:** is Sport England's representative in the county. It works at a local, countywide and regional level with its partners to bring about sustained system change in approaches to physical activity.

  The organisation wrote to offer its support to the proposed combined authority. As it works in many of the thematic areas identified as important in the devolution deal, including climate change and active travel, with a range of communities including rural communities and in areas experiencing multiple deprivation and inequalities, the Active Partnership states it can 'make a significant contribution to the success of devolution. Working in complex systems, showing impact and addressing inequalities is our business and we look forward to supporting the development of this major regional project and ensuring its success.'

- **New Writing North:** wrote to support the Devolution Deal for the North East and in support of the seven local authorities coming together to achieve this ambition. It suggests that devolution is 'our best bet' to ensure that the North East gets a

fairer financial settlement and can define and deliver its own future. Furthermore, that collaborative working at this scale will depth charge possibilities for co-operation and smarter working to address some of the huge challenges the region has around skills, employment, Net Zero and in how it represents and sells itself to the rest of the UK and beyond.

- **Rise North East:** is the active partnership for Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. It works with partners address issues facing communities, using the power of physical activity to tackle inequalities.

  Rise North East supports the approach set out in the North East devolution deal and could see the benefits devolution would bring to enable the region to make its own decisions.

  Rise North East is particularly interested in, and excited by, the areas of the devolution deal on transport, housing, land and planning and skills, employment and education. Rise North East hope for the appointment of an Active Travel Commissioner and the use of Active Design Principles in planning. It also welcomes the reference to a potential vehicle to support and promote grassroots sport and physical activity and to a new Radical Prevention Fund for population health.

- **Sport England:** support people to be active so that everyone can benefit from the profound physical and mental health benefits it brings and encourage the proposed combined authority to do the same.

  Sport England has supported other devolution deals across England where a health-in-all-policies approach has been taken. It would encourage the proposed combined authority to ensure that any devolution deal provides a clear and codified framework for collaboration between national and local partners – alongside a clear focus on sport and physical activity, defining the additionality this could bring - it looks forward to working with Authority to deliver such an agenda.

Public Sector

- **Durham Constabulary:** agree with the principle of devolution and are pleased to see the investment the deal will bring to the region. They believe that economic growth can only be achieved by having localised decision making and creating the right conditions for investment and look forward to receiving feedback on the progress being made.

- **Durham Enable:** is a supported employment service which supports the creation of a combined authority. They want to see additional funding to support those furthest away from the labour market (highlighting their service model as an example of good practice) and consultation with disabled people and those with long term health conditions on the combined authority's adult education and skills initiatives.

- **North East Procurement Organisation** (NEPO): is the North East's public buying organisation, funded and governed by the twelve North East local authorities.

  The North East Devolution deal would help leverage more investment into the region, tackle skills challenges, ensure the transport system is fit for purpose and deliver the jobs of the future.

  Public procurement would be a bedrock for delivering the devolution deal and NEPO would play a central role in delivering the ambitions of the deal.

  NEPO is fully supportive of the North East devolution deal and NEPO looks forward to working in partnership to make it a success.

- **Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner:** submitted a letter of support for the North East devolution deal. Elements of the deal give the region the tools to address the challenges of unemployment, economic inactivity, health inequalities and child poverty. These include investment in the transport system, the investment fund and oversight of the skills agenda.

- **Pegswood Parish Council:** offer their support for the proposals contained in the scheme for North East Devolution and is keen to see good governance in place, accountability by the Mayor and seven representative members and efficient use of funds to the best advantage of North East population.

- **Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority**: offer their support for the current devolution proposals for the North East area. They believe that investment in the North East to date has not matched the challenges faced and the potential inward investment and greater say in determining local matters will be a positive step.

  The Fire and Rescue Authority welcome plans to invest in infrastructure, transport and regeneration projects, for as well as driving up the area commercial, domestic and visitor offer the deal has the potential to improve life chances and opportunities for young people, support vulnerable communities and improve skills and employment opportunities across the area.

- **County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS)** welcome the investment into the North East region from the proposed devolution deal and the intention for councils to work together. It also welcomes any opportunities for further consultation on issues arising as the devolution deal comes into force and for developing relationships with key stakeholders.

  As the proposed governance arrangements do not refer to existing combined orders, the CDDFRS anticipates that in the medium term the direct impact of the devolution deal on the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington would be minimal.

Housing

- **North East Housing Associations:** collectively manage 12,000 homes in the region and view the deal as a hugely exciting opportunity for the North East. They believe that powers and funding are best held with local decision makers who understand their region, its strengths and the challenges it faces, and this is an opportunity for the North East to take its future into its own hands.

  The Associations believe that the social housing sector has an integral role to play in the future of the North East by developing more affordable homes, shaping sustainable communities and supporting the wider economy through training and job opportunities, together with our significant spending power. This broad contribution would be enhanced by the range of powers that the devolution deal unlocks:

  - the £69 million allocated in the deal for housing and regeneration would support their plans to build more good quality homes where people need them most
  - the £1.4 billion investment fund could support further regeneration projects that they are well placed to act as delivery partners on.
  - the £1.8 billion identified for adult education and skills which links with the emerging need for skilled employees who can deliver the large-scale programmes of decarbonisation investment required in the region, creating high quality employment opportunities.

  The North East Housing Associations acknowledge the benefits that other combined authorities have brought to the areas they serve and the significant convening powers they have to bring together partners to address long-standing issues, therefore they look forward to being a key part of those partnerships.

Other stakeholders

- **Tyne Task Force:** brings together MPs, councillors, businesses, the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult, the Port of Tyne, local authorities and the North of Tyne Combined Authority to focus on issues, challenges and opportunities offered by the River Tyne. Members of the Task Force welcome the deal for both its content, and for the opportunity it presents to deepen devolution to the region. They note the evidence that this is both a genuine functional economic area enclosing both labour market and sectoral geographies, and one with genuine scale and a combination of assets across business, education, and labour force, particularly in relation to marine and maritime assets, skills, investment and employment.

  The Tyne Task Force strongly back the deal's focus on the delivery of a 'Green SuperPort' structure and the proposal to address the electricity pylons that cross the river. They also strongly wish to engage collectively with the opportunities afforded to the river by the advanced Skills and Investment Zone Status. The Taskforce believe that together these proposals give the region a real chance to make long lasting positive change for the river, associated businesses, the citizens of the region and to support UK aspirations for Net Zero, Renewable Energy, long term sustainable employment, defence and shipbuilding amongst other policy positions and believe a collective voice under a newly devolved combined authority will be an essential pillar towards this end.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

North East Devolution Consultation

We would welcome your views on the proposed changes to the way the councils in the North East work together. Please take a few minutes to complete the following questions. The consultation finishes on **23 March 2023**. All information provided will be treated as confidential and will not be attributable to you.

In order to help you answer each of the questions on the proposed changes to the way councils work together in the North East, we have provided a summary of the key points. Further details on these can be found on the North of Tyne Devolution website.

To begin the questionnaire, please press the 'next' button below.

Changing how councils work together (governance)

To implement the devolution deal and access the long-term funding and devolved powers for the area we are proposing that the following changes are made to the way in which the seven councils work together across the North East region:

- The abolition of the two combined authorities which currently exist in the area of the seven councils; and

- The creation of a single new mayoral combined authority to cover the area of all seven councils.

- The Mayor for the new NEMCA will be elected by the local government electors for the seven council areas and the first Mayor is to be elected in May 2024.

- Each term of the Mayor will be four years.

- It is proposed that the Cabinet of the Combined Authority will comprise 8 members made up of:

  - The Mayor
  - Seven elected members, one appointed from each council

This group are known as voting members.

In addition, the Cabinet will be supported by a representative of the business community and a representative of the community and voluntary sector; these will be non-voting Members.

Q1 Do you agree or disagree with our proposals for the revised arrangements for the Combined Authority, as set out and in the Scheme, in particular the proposed arrangements for a Mayor, mayoral combined authority, and the councils, working together?

- ◯ **Agree**
- ◯ **Neither agree nor disagree**
- ◯ **Disagree**

Please give your reasons here:

Transport

The new Combined Authority would use a full package of devolved transport investment and powers to create an integrated transport system.

If the (North East Mayoral Combined Authority NEMCA) is created it will be the designated Local Transport Authority for the area under the Transport Act 2000. As North East Combined Authority (NECA) and North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) will be abolished, the Joint Transport Committee will also cease to exist. NEMCA will exercise the transport functions for the Combined Area which were previously held by NECA and NTCA.

The following functions are the responsibility of the Mayor and are referred to as "Mayoral Functions:":

- Power to draw up a Local Transport Plan and strategies
- Bus franchising powers
- Ability to pay grants to bus service operators
- Ability to pay grants to the Constituent Councils for exercising transport functions.
- Develop and agree a strategy for the key route network of roads

Q2 Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to confer transport functions and new transport related functions to a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority?

- ◯ **Agree**
- ◯ **Neither agree nor disagree**
- ◯ **Disagree**

Please give your reasons here:

Housing and planning

While the individual local authorities would continue to discharge their housing responsibilities, with new powers the NEMCA would work to improve the supply and quality of housing; to support in other ways the creation, regeneration and development of communities or their continued well-being and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and good design.

Mayoral functions will be:

- Power to designate Mayoral Development Areas and establish Mayoral Development Corporations

- Housing and land acquisition powers [including compulsory purchase] to support housing, regeneration, infrastructure and community development and well being

- Power to draw up a Spatial Development Strategy (subject to NEMCA agreeing to allocate the power to the Mayor) .

Q3 Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to confer housing and planning functions from central government to a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority?

- ◯ **Agree**
- ◯ **Neither agree nor disagree**
- ◯ **Disagree**

Please give your reasons here:

Finance and investment

It is proposed that the new combined authority will have new finance powers to help deliver a long term investment plan to support employment and growth opportunities across the region.

These include:

The power to issue to the Constituent Councils levies under section 74 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to meet the expenditure that is reasonably attributable to the exercise of its functions. It is proposed that NEMCA will be able to issue three transport levies, as is currently the case across the Combined Area, ie a levy for Durham, a levy for Northumberland and levy for the Tyne and Wear area.

It is proposed that the Mayor will have the power to issue a Council Tax Precept on behalf of NEMCA to provide for the costs of the Mayor that are incurred in, or in connection with, the exercise of Mayoral Functions. The Cabinet will be able to amend the proposal for a precept if at least 5 Members of the Cabinet oppose them.

Q4 Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to confer additional finance functions on a North East Mayor and Mayoral Combined Authority?

- ◯ **Agree**
- ◯ **Neither agree nor disagree**
- ◯ **Disagree**

Please give your reasons here:

Skills, employment and adult education

The devolution deal gives the region more control and funding to shape skills and help people into jobs and careers.

It is proposed that NEMCA will be given devolved functions in respect of Adult Education and will control the Adult Education Budget from the academic year 2024/2025. (These arrangements will not cover apprenticeships training or persons subject to adult detention.)

Q5 Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to move these skills, employment and adult education functions to a North East Mayoral Combined Authority?

- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Neither agree or disagree
- ◯ Disagree

Please give your reasons here:

Q6 Are there any comments you would like to make that you do not feel you have addressed in your response so far?

About You

By answering the questions below you will help us to make sure we are consulting with and can take into consideration the views of our diverse communities (please note this section contains routing so some questions may be skipped depending upon your answers).

Q7 In which of the following are you primarily completing this questionnaire?

- ◯ As a resident
- ◯ As a business representative
- ◯ As a member of the Voluntary and Community sector
- ◯ As an education provider
- ◯ As a housing and development representative
- ◯ As a transport representative
- ◯ Trade Union
- ◯ Other

Q8 Which one of the following Local Authorities do you pay your Council Tax to?

- ◯ Durham County Council
- ◯ Gateshead Borough Council
- ◯ Newcastle City Council
- ◯ Northumberland County Council
- ◯ North Tyneside Borough Council
- ◯ South Tyneside Borough Council
- ◯ Sunderland City Council
- ◯ Not applicable

Q9 Please provide the name of your business or organisation in the space below:

Q9a Which one of the following Local Authorities is your organisation or company based in?

- ◯ Durham County Council
- ◯ Gateshead Borough Council
- ◯ Newcastle City Council
- ◯ Northumberland County Council
- ◯ North Tyneside Borough Council
- ◯ South Tyneside Borough Council
- ◯ Sunderland City Council
- ◯ Not applicable

Q10 Are you...?

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Q11 Which of the following age ranges do you fall into?

- ◯ 15 or under
- ◯ 16-24
- ◯ 25-34
- ◯ 35-44
- ◯ 45-59
- ◯ 60-74
- ◯ 75 or over
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Q12 Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?

- ◯ Arab
- ◯ Asian or Asian British: Indian
- ◯ Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- ◯ Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- ◯ Asian or Asian British: Chinese
- ◯ Any other Asian Background
- ◯ Black or Black British: Caribbean
- ◯ Black or Black British: African
- ◯ Any other Black Background
- ◯ Mixed Heritage: White and Black Caribbean
- ◯ Mixed Heritage: White and Black African
- ◯ Mixed Heritage: White and Asian
- ◯ Any other Mixed Background
- ◯ White British
- ◯ White Irish
- ◯ Gypsy / Traveller
- ◯ Any other White Background
- ◯ Other ethnic group
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Q13 Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Q13a If yes, do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities?

- ◯ Yes a lot
- ◯ Yes a little
- ◯ Not at all

Q14 What is your religion/belief?

- ◯ Buddhist
- ◯ Christian (includes Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian Denominations)
- ◯ Hindu
- ◯ Jewish
- ◯ Muslim
- ◯ Sikh
- ◯ No religion
- ◯ Other

Q15 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- ◯ Bisexual
- ◯ Gay or Lesbian
- ◯ Straights/Heterosexual
- ◯ Other
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Q16 Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No (if you wish please write in your gender identity below)
- ◯ Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix B: How the consultation was promoted

Pre-consultation

The announcement that a devolution deal had been reached was made on 28th December 2022 and was first announced nationally by government. Localised statements were issued by the seven constituent councils aimed at local media outlets.

Standardised local press releases were published by each of the seven councils, but for the purposes of this report, links to published releases will be provided from Newcastle City Council's website:

- New North East devolution deal – 28th December 2022.

The announcement of the 'minded to' deal achieved widespread media coverage, including on the BBC and in The Guardian as well as among local titles.

This was also further publicised through the respective social media channels of the seven local authorities involved.

Consultation period

The consultation period began on 23rd January 2023, after the Cabinets of each of the seven local authorities had approved the governance review and scheme and had agreed to move to public consultation.

Each council promoted the consultation through their own websites.

Two press releases were issued at different stages of this process. The first provided an update to highlight that the seven local authority Cabinets were set to meet to discuss the deal and be asked to approve to move to consultation:

- North East devolution deal set to progress – 13th January 2023

The second formally announced the start of the consultation period. This set out how people could take part in the consultation, how and where they could provide feedback, and what specifically they were being asked to provide their views on:

- £4.2bn devolution deal for the North East – 26th January 2023.

There was again significant local media coverage across the region, including by the Hexham Courant (Northumberland), Chronicle Live (Newcastle) and the Northern Echo (County Durham).

A further press release was issued in the week before the end of the consultation period to remind people to have their say before the opportunity was gone:

- North East devolution consultation reaches final stages – 16th March 2023

Social media

Each of the seven local authorities made use of their considerable social media followings to promote the public consultation across the entire region.

These channels were used to share press releases which had been sent to media outlets, publish an explainer video which detailed what the consultation was about, weekly reminders that the consultation was in process, details about other offline opportunities people had to provide feedback, and issue reminders across the region ahead of the consultation coming to a close.

Content was standardised to ensure that people in all parts of the region were receiving the same information in a consistent manner throughout the consultation period.

In-person events

At least one in-person consultation event was held in each of the seven local authority areas.

Members of the public were invited to attend these events to hear a presentation explaining what was in the deal, how the new Mayoral Combined Authority would function, what its powers were and how this would impact anybody who lives or works in the region. Attendees were also invited to put questions to senior councillors and officers in attendance, while they also had the chance to provide their consultation responses in person instead of having to submit them online.

These events were publicised through councils' respective social media channels to reach audiences within their own local authority area.

Regional stakeholder events aimed at specific sectors such as the voluntary and community sector, business, transport and education sectors were also held.

Other

A communications toolkit was produced ahead of the launch of the consultation to enable partner organisations and key stakeholders of each council to help promote the consultation to their own internal and external audiences.

This included:

- social media assets
- website and newsletter content
- e-mail footers
- key contacts
- FAQs

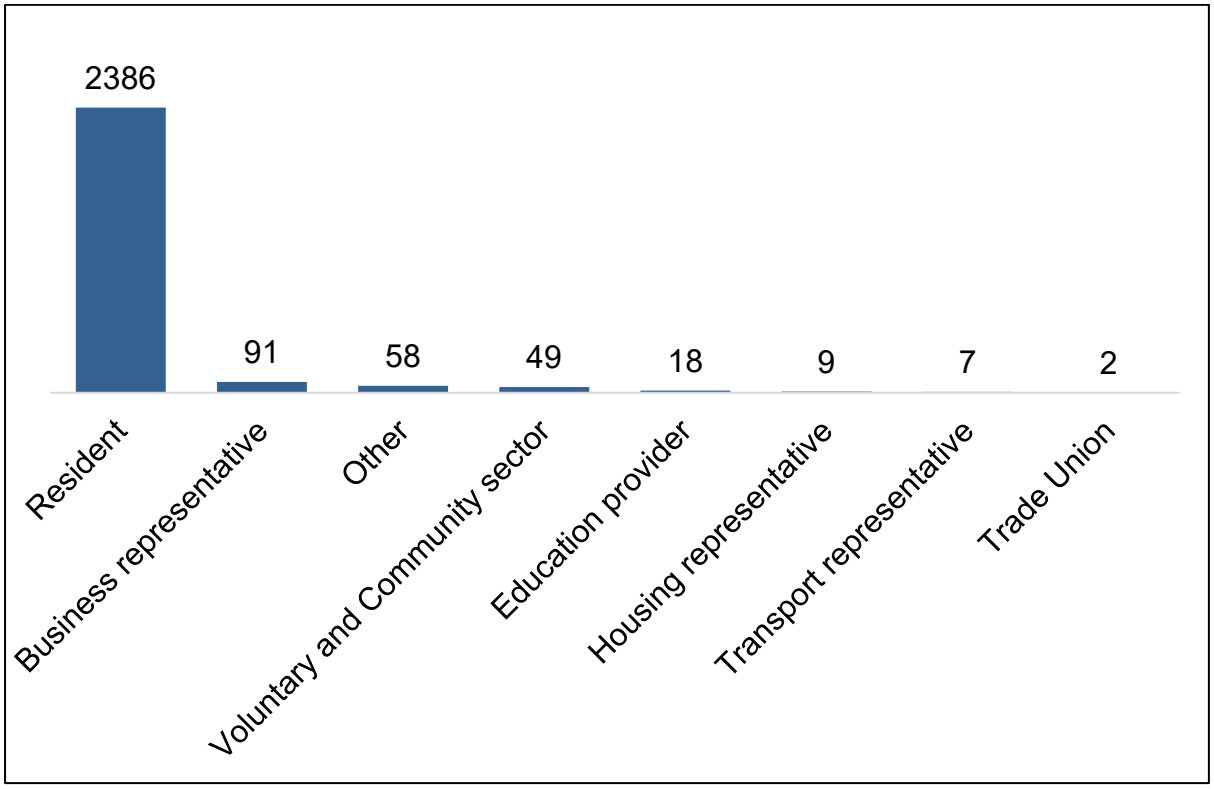
Easy-read versions of key consultation documents were also produced to make the process more accessible to respondents.

Appendix C: Demographics

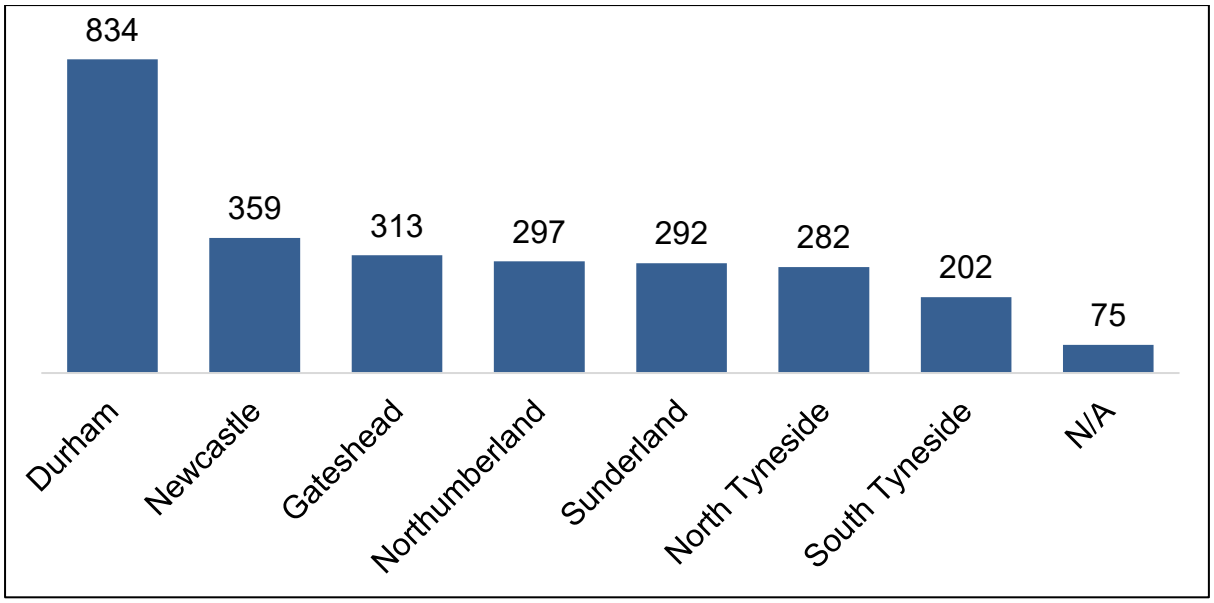
Profile of who took part in the survey

Responding as: The clear majority of people who took part in the survey did so in their capacity as residents. 2,386 responses were from residents.

Of the 58 respondents identifying as other, 31 did not provide any further information, 20 were from other types of organisation (e.g. local authorities, other public sector organisations), 5 stated their job role (e.g councillor, local authority officer), 2 were residents.



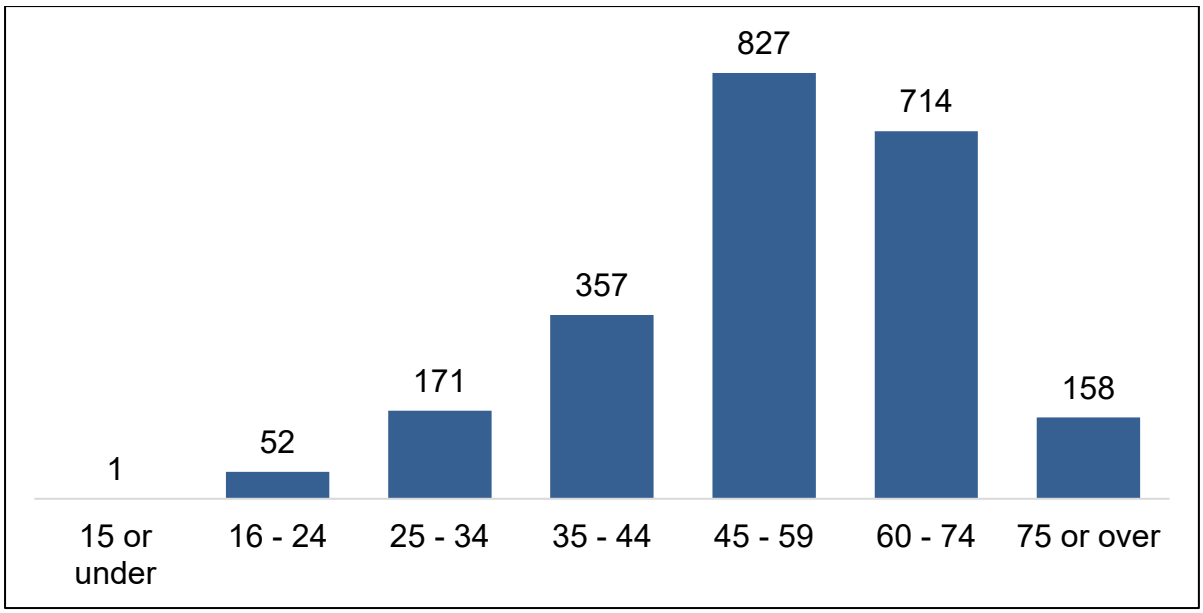
Local authority: Just under a third of responses came from County Durham.



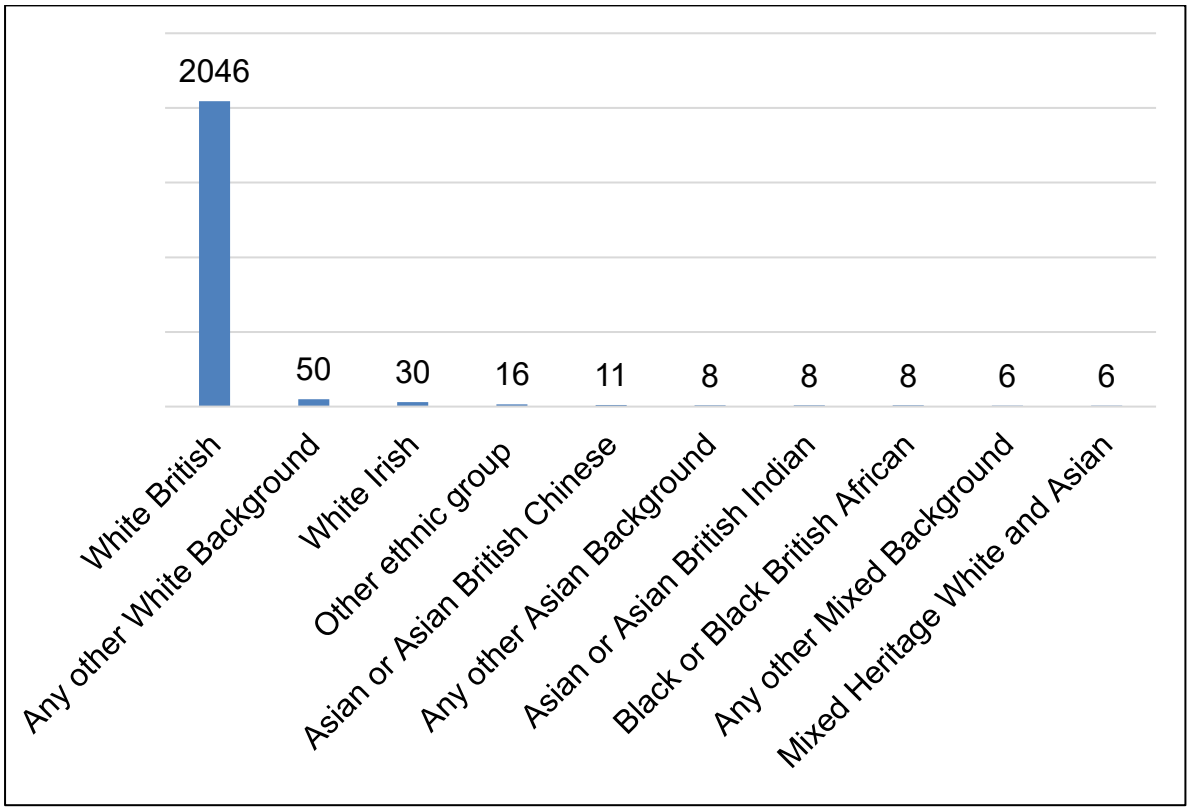
Sex: 895 respondents identified as female and 1,206 as male, 239 preferred not to say.

Gender: 16 respondents said that their gender is not the same as their sex registered at birth.

Age group: Almost two-thirds of respondents were aged 45-74 years old.

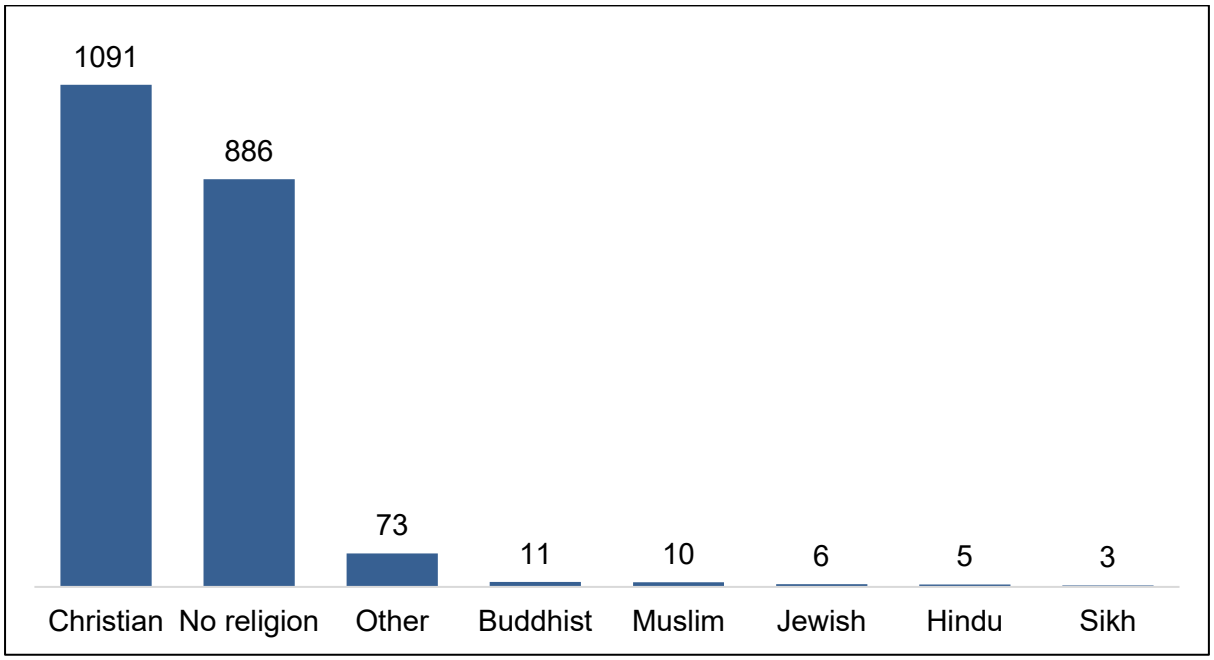


Ethnicity: 97.1% of respondents identified as white, 2.9% of respondents identified as being from all other ethnic groups combined.

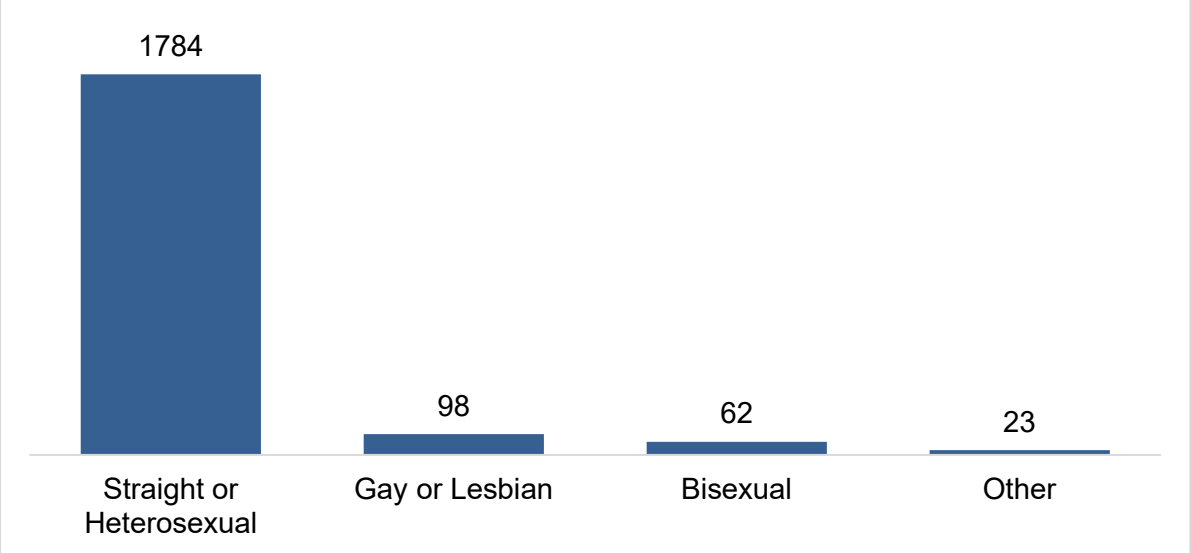


Disability/long term condition: 346 people (16.4% respondents answering this question) said they had a physical or mental health condition or illness that has lasted (or is expected to last) longer than 12 months and reduce their ability to carry out day to day tasks.

Religion: 52% of respondents answering this question identified as Christian, while 42.5% said they have no religion.



Sexual orientation: 9% of respondents identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other.



Appendix D: Full list of issues from the consultation

All comments to the consultation were read and coded into themes.

Section 4 in the report highlights the key issues that people raised, per theme and by view, during the consultation.

This appendix includes the full list of issues that were raised during the consultation survey.

1. Changing how councils work together

Agree

- **The proposals make sense** (275 responses). These comments stated that the proposals make sense, will create efficiencies, increase resources, ensure a coordinated strategy and are the best option for the region.
- **The proposal will increase regional power** (218 responses). These comments welcomed the increased powers and local decision making the deal will bring and were positive about the role of the mayor and the higher profile they would help to create for the region.
- **Working together benefits the region** (190 responses). These comments said the proposals were an opportunity for local authorities and stakeholder organisations to work together for the benefit of the region.
- **Change is needed** (25 responses). These comments said that change was needed as the current system wasn't working.
- **Missed out due to delays** (20 responses). These comments said that the area had missed out due to devolution not happening earlier and wanted the proposals to proceed as quickly as possible.
- **Other** (29 responses). These comments referred to saving money, increased accountability and positivity around the inclusion of non-voting members.

Neither agree nor disagree

- **Agreement in principle, but with some concerns, questions or caveats** (79 responses). These comments were broadly in favour of the proposals but raised specific areas of concern, had questions or showed support for the proposals if one or more conditions were met.

- **Other** (78 responses). These comments referred to a variety of issues, including a desire to see the proposals go further and replacing/changing existing local authorities.
- **A need for more information** (65 responses). These comments requested more information or details about the proposals and how they would be implemented.
- **Changes or clarity to the non-voting roles on the Cabinet of the Combined Authority** (59 responses). These comments asked for more representatives from the business and voluntary and community sectors, education or cultural sector representation, thought these representatives should have voting rights or wanted clarity about how they would be appointed.
- **Cabinet arrangements** (38 responses). These comments thought there should be more councillors from each local authority in the cabinet. Clarity was also sought about how cabinet members would be appointed alongside a desire from some for Cabinet Members to be directly elected.

Disagree

- **Lack of trust** (230 responses). These comments raised concerns that creation of the Combined Authority would result in the concentration of power in the hands of one person or a small group of people and the organisation being unaccountable. Lack of trust in politicians (locally and nationally), local authorities and the national government were also highlighted.
- **Additional bureaucracy** (226 responses). These comments said the proposals would result in an extra layer of bureaucracy with associated additional costs.
- **The creation of the Combined Authority would be unfair or detrimental to some areas** (179 responses). These comments said that implementation of the proposals would be unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas and County Durham, concerns were raised that Newcastle or larger settlements would unfairly benefit.
- **Undemocratic** (109 responses). These comments said the proposals were undemocratic, that there was no mandate for the proposals or that they/the North East had previously voted against devolution.
- **Will not or do not work** (64 responses). These comments believe the proposals will not work or that combined authorities elsewhere do not work, with some respondents feeling that the proposals were simply a bad idea.

- **Too big or different** (62 responses). These comments said the area involved was too large and that the areas were too different to be able to make the proposals a success and to ensure the benefits were felt in all areas.
- **Unnecessary** (48 responses). These comments didn't agree with the proposals as the believed them to be unnecessary and the current system should not be changed.
- **Not enough money** (32 responses). These comments said the deal did not provide enough money or investment to be worth the conditions attached.

2. Transport

Agree

- **The region needs an integrated transport system** (174 responses). These comments said it was important to have an integrated transport system, with different modes of transport working together, including ticketing.
- **Working together as a region makes sense** (156 responses). These comments said it made sense for areas to work together, with a regional approach or strategy for transport.
- **An opportunity to improve transport** (135 responses). These comments said the proposals were an opportunity to improve transport, particularly public transport. Many of the comments referred to poor services which needed to be improved.
- **General support** (89 responses). These comments offered general support for the proposals, including the view that they were in the best interests of the region, would cost less than existing arrangements and would bring investment.
- **Suggested priorities** (87 responses). These comments suggested priorities for improving transport, including affordable and reliable public transport, control of buses through franchising, fully dualling the A1 and reopening the Leamside rail line.
- **Locally designed and accountable** (58 responses). These comments said transport should be locally designed or controlled and locally accountable.
- **Conditional support** (54 responses). These comments offered support for the proposals if certain conditions were met. These included fair funding for all areas, reduced costs and improved public transport.

- **Public transport problems** (27 responses). These comments referred to problems with public transport, particularly buses, and poor services in some areas, particularly rural areas.
- **Works well in other areas** (27 responses). These comments said the proposals would bring improvements in transport seen in areas such as London and Manchester to the region.
- **Extend Metro system** (20 responses). These comments called for the Metro system to be extended to other areas, including Washington and beyond Tyne and Wear.
- **Other** (48 responses). These comments referred to a variety of issues, including that transport should be nationalised or taken into public control, a need for more information and opposition to road schemes such as clean air zones, low traffic neighbourhoods and 15-minute cities.

Neither agree nor disagree

- **Suggested priorities** (30 responses). These comments suggested priorities for improving transport, including fully dualling the A1, better public transport and extending the Metro system to more areas.
- **Need more information** (23 responses). These comments said they needed more information on or details of the proposals and how they would be implemented.
- **Conditional support** (20 responses). These comments offered support for the proposals if certain conditions were met. These included being fair to all areas, improvements to public transport and lower costs.
- **Other** (103 responses). These comments referred to a variety of issues, including that the proposals would not lead to improvements, would be unfair or detrimental to some areas including rural areas, the need for an integrated transport system, problems with public transport, the proposals were an opportunity to improve transport, and opposition to road schemes such as clean air zones.

Disagree

- **Unfair or detrimental to some areas** (148 responses). These comments said the proposals were unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas. Some comments referred to the area included in the proposals being too large or diverse.

- **Not wanting a North East Mayor or concentration of power** (62 responses). These comments said they did not want a North East Mayor or the concentration of power in the hands of one person or a small group of people.
- **It would not lead to improvements** (53 responses). These comments said the proposals would not improve transport in the region. Many of the comments said bringing together local authorities who they feel had been unable to address transport problems, or had made things worse, would not change anything.
- **Opposition to the devolution deal** (52 responses). These comments were opposed to the North East devolution deal, with many referring to the result of the 2004 devolution referendum or wanting to keep the existing arrangements.
- **More bureaucracy** (47 responses). These comments said the proposals would lead to an unnecessary additional layer of bureaucracy or administration in the region.
- **Democratic deficit** (28 responses). These comments raised concerns including political infighting and self-interest, perceived corruption, lack of accountability and poor decision making.
- **Road schemes** (28 responses). These comments expressed opposition to road schemes such as clean air zones, bus and cycle lane and 15-minute cities. Some comments referred to not wanting to follow the approach taken in London.
- **Local control** (23 responses). These comments said decisions and control of transport should be the responsibility of individual local authorities rather than a regional body.
- **Other** (125 responses). These comments referred to a variety of issues, including problems with public transport, suggested priorities for improving transport, needing more information and nationalising transport or taking it into public control.

3. Housing and planning

Agree

- **The region needs an integrated housing approach** (104 responses). These respondents said it was important to have an integrated housing strategy, with a combined approach to issues impacting the North east.
- **The provision of more affordable and social housing** (100 responses). Respondents believed that the proposals would be an impetus for the building of

more affordable and social housing, something that was seen to be desperately needed.

- **Local people are best placed to make local decisions (**90 responses). Respondents welcomed the prospect of having the power to control budgets and make decisions locally, as opposed to in Westminster.
- **Environmental sustainability and the protection of green belts** (63 responses). Respondents said the proposals were an opportunity to improve environmentally sustainability within housing. Many comments were concerned with Net Zero targets and the protection of green belts.
- **Regeneration** (46 responses). These respondents highlighted potential benefits to regeneration in the region.
- **Support for devolution & the new deal** (22 responses). These respondents showed support for the new authority, mayor or devolution deal.
- **It would be unfair or detrimental to some areas** (19 responses). These respondents agreed with the proposals on the condition they were fair and that there was accountability within decision making.
- **Other** (69 responses). These respondents referred to a variety of issues, including the need for compulsory purchase orders (CPOS), homelessness and the role of housing associations.

Neither agree nor disagree

- **Conditional support** (67 responses). These respondents said they would support the proposals if one or more conditions were met. These included the proposals leading to the provision of more affordable and social housing, environmental sustainability and the need for compulsory purchase orders.
- **A need for more information** (46 responses). These respondents said they needed more information on or details about the proposals and how they would be implemented.
- **It would be unfair or detrimental to some areas** (25 responses). These comments said the proposals could be unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas. Some comments referred to the area included in the proposal being too large or diverse.
- **Other** (47 responses). These respondents referred to a variety of issues, including regeneration, rogue landlords and cost implications.

Disagree

- **Not wanting concentration of power or opposed to a new deal** (141 responses). These comments said they did not want a North East Mayor or the concentration of power in the hands of one person or a small group of people.
- **It would be unfair or detrimental to some areas** (105 responses). These respondents said the proposals would be unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas. Some comments referred to the area included in the proposals being too large or diverse.
- **Housing to remain under the control of individual authorities** (54 responses). These comments were opposed to the North East devolution deal, with many wanting to keep the existing arrangements.
- **Environmental sustainability and the protection of green belts** (41 responses). These respondents said the proposals would not improve environmental sustainability in the region. Many of the respondents were concerned that green belts would not be protected and that new properties would be substandard in terms of sustainability.
- **The provision of more affordable and social housing** (24 responses). Respondents believed that the housing needs of the North East would not be met. Many expressed the need for new affordable social housing but were uncertain whether this issue would be resolved.
- **Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs)** (21 responses). These respondents expressed opposition to compulsory purchase orders. Some comments outright rejected the devolution proposal based on this power.
- **Other** (100 responses). These comments referred to a variety of issues, including problems with new costs, rogue landlords, regeneration and some made suggestions on how to improve current housing issues.

4. Finance and investment

Agree

- **Long-term investment that will create opportunities and improvement in the region** (110 responses). These comments suggested that devolution would attract strategic long-term investment that would improve the region by creating better infrastructure (e.g., transport) and opportunities for employment, thereby helping to close the North / South divide.

- **If there is fair distribution of funds** (63 responses). These comments agreed that devolution would be positive for the region as long as the finances were distributed evenly across the area without the need for a rise in council tax or other costs to local people.

- **Support better decisions based on local knowledge** (53 responses). These comments believe that devolved finances will allow better decisions to made by local representatives who 'know' the area better than Whitehall.

- **Ensure transparency and accountability** (32 responses). These comments agreed with the idea of devolution but wanted reassurance about the transparency and accountability of decision making.

Neither agree nor disagree

- **They did not understand the proposals** (39 responses). These comments suggested respondents did not understand the proposals and that more information was needed to make an informed decision about whether or not the devolution deal would be beneficial.

- **Concerns with increased costs** (36 responses). These comments said they were not sure about the devolution deal and were concerned that it may lead to increased costs for local people, including higher council tax.

Disagree

- **It would increase costs to local people** (244 responses). These comments said the proposals were unfair as it would inevitably mean more costs for local people in order to fund the new Mayor's activities and result in higher council tax.

- **Concerns with distribution** (60 responses). These comments suggested that devolution would bring an unequal distribution of funds with the 'bigger' cities getting a higher proportion of resources compared to more rural areas.

- **Bureaucracy** (39 responses). These comments said that devolution would create more bureaucracy which would inhibit delivery.

- **Waste** (38 responses). These comments were opposed to the North East devolution deal, with respondents suggesting the deal is a waste of money and things should be kept as they are.

- **Undemocratic** (30 responses). These comments highlighted a belief that the process for agreeing a devolution deal is undemocratic as a referendum has not been held.

5. Education, skills and employment

Agree

- **Skills and training should be delivered at the NEMCA level.** (327 responses). Respondents felt that national delivery was too out of touch with local needs and/or local authority level delivery was too small to be efficient or lacked synergies. Integration with other partners was often felt to be enhanced at this geographic level, as was efficient use of funding.
- **Agree with the proposals but with some caveats.** (108 responses). Respondents felt that apprenticeships should be included in scope; governance should include education providers and businesses and funding should be shared fairly across local authorities.
- **Increase in funding welcomed.** (43 responses). These respondents only cited the extra funding available.

Neither agree nor disagree

- **A request for more information** (87 responses). These respondents wanted further information to help them form an opinion either about skills training in the region or the devolution proposals. Others wanted to understand more about how funding would be shared fairly between local authorities.
- **Will not improve** (22 responses). These respondents felt that these proposals would have no impact.
- **Should be a wider scope** (17 responses). A variety of levels of activity were offered including that proposals should include Higher Education; higher level qualifications; lower-level qualifications or schools.

Disagree

- **NEMCA is too large an area for skills planning and delivery** (95 responses). These respondents felt that Local Authorities were best placed to deliver these proposals.
- **Concerns around governance** (79 responses). These comments said these respondents did not want a North East Mayor; or were worried about the

concentration of power in the hands of one person or a small group of people; many expressed distrust of politicians in general or noted that these proposals had not been subject to a referendum.

- **NEMCA was too small an area for skills planning and delivery** (39 responses). Respondents stated that the proposed activities were best coordinated and funded at a national level.
- **Felt the proposals would not work** (38 responses). These respondents stated that the proposed activities would not achieve improvements within NECMA. Often citing insufficient funding or inadequate scope.
- **Unfair or detrimental to some areas** (32 responses). These comments said the proposals would be unfair or detrimental to some areas, particularly rural areas or specific local authorities.