

County Deals: options for governance, powers and funding

County Councils Network
Annual Conference

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Introduction

County Deals sit at the heart of Government's agenda to respond to the pandemic and deliver levelling up – and they have set out some high-level 'guiding principles' to support their development

Our work has built on these to help ensure County Deals can be delivered at pace, thinking through:



Defining a sensible geography



Asking for the right mix of powers



Establishing appropriate governance models

Defining a sensible geography (i)



County Unitary

Positives

- ✓ Single body
- ✓ Single vision
- ✓ Coterminous boundaries

Negatives

- ↓ Smaller scale
- ↓ Interdependence
- ↓ Multiple economic centres



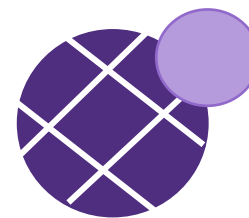
County & Districts

Positives

- ✓ County is natural lead
- ✓ Build on existing working
- ✓ Clear delineation of power

Negatives

- ↓ Friction around powers
- ↓ Multiple economic centres
- ↓ Range of priorities



County & Adjacent Unitary

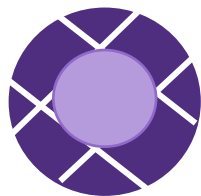
Positives

- ✓ Offers economic scale
- ✓ Shared services/resources
- ✓ Joint strategies

Negatives

- ↓ Leadership challenges
- ↓ Governance challenges
- ↓ Interdependence

Defining a sensible geography (ii)



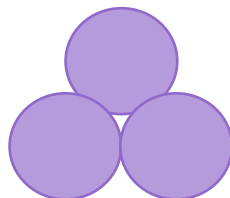
Doughnut

Positives

- ✓ Economic scale
- ✓ Shared services/resources
- ✓ Joint strategies

Negatives

- ↓ City crucial to success
- ↓ Political risks
- ↓ Power sharing required



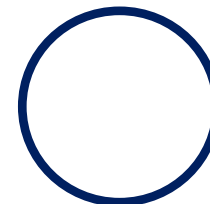
Multiple Unitaries

Positives

- ✓ Shared services/resources
- ✓ Joint strategies
- ✓ Regional alignment

Negatives









- ↓ Not clear centre
- ↓ Lack of a shared vision
- ↓ Governance challenges



Overlaying factors

- Political affiliation
- Number of partners
- Partner influence
- Range of strategic priorities
- Economic growth potential
- Stakeholder complexity

Asking for the right mix of powers

-  Parity in terms of existing devolution deals
-  Granting of associated planning related powers
-  Funding to catalyse and support delivery
-  Asks that reflect the uniqueness of place
-  Innovation vs delivery
-  The level of priority for devolution across central government
-  The potential for double devolution
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Establishing appropriate governance models (i)

Objectives

- Decisions made in line with statutory requirements
- Underpinned by a legal basis
- All parties a clear on what has been agreed
- Decisions can be scrutinised and challenged
- Decisions are made transparently
- Assurance that value for money is being delivered

Models

Option 1: Mayoral Combined Authority

Option 2: Leader and Cabinet with Non Statutory Board

Option 3: Directly Elected County Leader and Non-Statutory Board

Option 4: Multi Authority Statutory Board

Suitability

Strength of governance:

- Single strategic vision
- Clear political mandate
- Manage competing priorities
- Single profile and identity

Deliverability:

- Complexity legislative process and timing
- Opposition from public & other stakeholders
- Opposition from key partners
- Additional costs and bureaucracy

Establishing appropriate governance models (i)

<i>Critical Success Factor – Composite Score</i>	<i>Single County Unitary</i>	<i>Simple County and Districts</i>	<i>County & adjacent Unitaries</i>	<i>County & Unitary 'Doughnut'</i>	<i>Multiple Unitaries</i>
Option 1: Mayoral Combined Authority	NA	-4	+1	+1	+4
Option 2: Leader and Cabinet with Non-Statutory Board	+8	+6	+3	+3	-3
Option 3: Directly Elected County Leader and Non-Statutory Board	+5	+4	+1	+1	-4
Option 4: Multi-Authority Statutory Board	NA	+1	+2	+2	+2
<i>Highest Scoring Option</i>	Option 2	Option 2	Option 2	Option 2	Option 1

The priorities for County Authorities

1. Establish a **'sensible economic area'**
2. Ensure that there is a **'golden thread'** between **powers and asks** and the unique **challenges and opportunities** of place – striking the right **balance between innovation and deliverability**
3. Carefully **assess the most appropriate governance model**, considering a broad range of factors and taking a **pragmatic approach to reflect political and partner relationships**

The asks of Government

1. Provide clarity around a **'sensible economic area'**
2. Ensure that there is wider involvement and commitment from other departments
3. Funding is of equal importance to new powers
4. Maintain the commitment to explore alternative governance options as the analysis shows that the Mayoral Combined Authority model will be difficult to deliver in many county geographies

For further information...

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