



English Devolution: enabling integrated long term transport planning

England is facing a number of significant challenges in ensuring its transport infrastructure is resilient now and in the future. These challenges including deteriorating transport assets, an infrastructure deficit resulting in highly congested networks, and the growth in the UK population which is forecast to increase by 5 million by 2032. There are significant barriers to long-term investment, including short-term funding, fragmented powers, and unclear and convoluted legislative arrangements. This fragmented approach means that in many urban areas no one organisation has overall control of all transport modes and this, combined with short term funding, results in a lack of integrated transport planning.

The Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill 2025, currently progressing through the UK Parliament, aims to address these problems by creating a single strategic authority. Devolution will empower Mayors of these strategic authorities with new powers over transport, housing, skills, and economic development, supported by integrated, long-term, funding settlements. They will have wide ranging new competencies, establishing in legislation a defined set of areas where Mayors have the competency to act, such as on transport, local infrastructure, housing and strategic planning. They will also be able to borrow and levy powers to deliver on local priorities.

They will have a stronger role in shaping investment strategies with national transport operators, such as National Highways, who manage England's Strategic Road Network, and Network Rail. Mayors will have a statutory role in Britain's railways, including the right to request further devolution of rail services and infrastructure.

This is a once in a generation change that if successful will enable integrated and joined up long-term planning across all transport modes, ensuring that funding available is used effectively to meet England's transport needs and provide resilience for the future.