

APSE Local Government Commission 2030

Emerging Questions and Themes

Call for Evidence

January 2020

Local Government Commission 2030

- UK wide call for evidence opened in October 2019.
- Roles and Powers; Organisation and Structures; Democracy and Governance; Funding; Addressing Inequality and Empowering Communities; Local Government Workforce; Centre-Local Relations.
- On-going 'living document' - have your say.
- Partial analysis here of Call for Evidence, seeking your thoughts on emerging themes; not presenting the views of the Commission.

Future Roles and Powers

- Support for the role of local government as a 'hub'
- Associated with acting as a steward of place; delivering local services; generating community wealth; driving forward local democracy; advancing early intervention and prevention; and tackling climate change.
- What would a 'hub model' look like in practice? Coordinator or insurer?
- What areas of enhanced collaboration and integration? Spatial planning? Housing across all markets? Economic development? Transport? The climate emergency?

Future Roles and Powers

- Broad support for further devolution of powers, with devolution seen as vehicle for organisational cultural change and new forms of collaboration.
- A 'collaborative regional' approach leading to 'collaborative production' between authorities? Or devolution to local authorities and then onto communities? Or both?
- What additional powers if going to ensure wellbeing outcomes?
- And what about centre-local relations? Constitutional protection as part of devolution and reorganisation, if so, how?

Funding

- More autonomy in setting local taxation regimes and fees, with lifting of capping and referendum caps and more flexible business rates.
- Hand-in-hand with the relaxation of rules over income-generation.
- Calls for fairer distribution of funding between authorities, not simply local funding but also spending on infrastructure and other investment programmes.
- What might new funding arrangements look like? Are local taxes or levies the answer? If so, how? How to ensure long-term sustainable and fair funding between authorities?

Questions of Organisation and Governance

- Questions of size of authority and fragmented landscape in which authorities operate, particularly in England.
- Endorsement of unitary authorities, from 320,000/350,000-700,000, co-terminus with health partners and/or based on the sub-regional economy and economic footprint?
- But, how to recognise plurality of different geographies, with focus on local place identity, the cultures and villages that make up an area?

Questions of Organisation and Governance

- Neighbourhood working with multidisciplinary [cross-organisational] local teams with area knowledge and devolved budgets.
- Co-production, participatory budgeting and community ownership, working with anchor organisations.
- What is the effectiveness of these modes of neighbourhood working across all local communities? How to empower communities and tackle all forms of inequality? How to build community cohesion?
- Investment in digital to deliver cultural transformation.

Questions of Organisation and Governance

- What future role for elected members?
- Make elected membership attractive and sustainable for working age people across a diverse demographic.
- But how? Additional payments to support full-time roles?

Future Workforce

- Commitment to change recruitment policies and current structures; Moving away from ‘traditional public service roles’ but to what set of skills?
- What mixture of capabilities and capacities to deliver community wealth building and entrepreneurship, agility, resilience, problem-solving, partnership-building, robust project management and technological skills.
- Values were deemed to be in need of change, with effective Equalities Strategies embedded across all councils; how to make council workforce representative of local community?
- How to get young people into the workforce through the intake of apprentices?

Call for Evidence

- Living document - still taking evidence
- Have your say - visit the APSE LGC webpage and upload your response.