

ANNEX A

Local government geography and history

This annex contains the following geographical and historical information:

- **Maps of local authority areas in England** **section A1**
- **Parish and town councils** **section A2**
- **Changes in English local authority functions and structure** **section A3**

A1 Maps of local authority areas in England

Chapter 1.3 describes the structure of local government. The following maps show all the individual shire counties and districts, metropolitan districts, unitary authorities, London boroughs and single purpose authorities from whom ODPM collect local government finance data. Map A1a shows all English county and Government Office regional boundaries, which are broken down to districts on **Maps A1b to A1f**.

- **All England** **Map A1a**
- **North East** **Map A1b**
- **North West** **Map A1b**
- **Yorkshire and the Humber** **Map A1b**
- **East Midlands** **Map A1c**
- **West Midlands** **Map A1c**
- **South West** **Map A1d**
- **South East** **Map A1e**
- **East of England** **Map A1e**
- **London** **Map A1f**
- **Fire (and passenger transport) authorities** **Map A1g**
- **Police authorities** **Map A1h**
- **Parks and waste authorities** **Map A1i**
- **Urban and rural authorities** **Map A1j**

A2 Parish and town councils

There are about 8,700 parish and town councils in England, and about 1,500 parish meetings, where there is no council. They vary widely in many ways. Some represent hamlets of fewer than 100 people whereas others represent larger towns, with populations of up to 70,000. Their annual budgets range from under £100 to £2 million. The role they play also varies widely. Some play a very modest and local role, but others are more active, with a role very similar to that of some of the smaller district councils. One of the measures to emerge from the rural white paper aimed at strengthening the role of parishes is the 'Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme' which was developed and launched in May 2003. There are now about 170 Quality Parish and Town Councils.

The number of parishes has increased recently. About 150 new ones have been created in England since 1997. Parishes have also been given some new powers in the last few years. These include powers to provide community transport, traffic calming and crime prevention measures under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

Central government does not collect information direct from parish or town councils, although information on the total amount of council tax required for parish councils (parish precepts) in each billing authority's area is collected from returns provided by billing authorities. Information on individual councils is, however, collected by auditors. This suggests that about 100 parish or town councils have an annual income of over £500,000.

Table A2a gives figures on trends in total precepts since 1998-99, nationally, by region and by area. The total has increased significantly during this period, from £154 million to £260 million. This is due partly to the creation of new parish and town councils and partly to the increase in activity of some of those that already existed.

Table A2a: Parish precepts

	£ million							
	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
England	154.0	165.1	181.0	193.3	210.1	225.6	241.5	259.9
By area								
Two-tier shire areas	125.8	134.6	147.5	156.7	170.2	183.6	197.2	211.9
Unitary shire areas	20.6	22.6	24.9	27.4	30.1	31.7	32.9	35.8
Metropolitan areas	7.4	7.7	8.5	9.0	9.6	10.1	11.3	12.0
London ^(a)	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
By region								
North East	8.2	8.6	9.1	9.5	10.1	10.5	11.1	11.7
North West	7.9	8.0	8.4	9.0	9.7	10.4	11.2	12.1
Yorkshire & the Humber	10.0	10.9	12.1	13.0	14.0	15.2	16.6	17.9
East Midlands	17.1	17.9	19.3	20.9	23.3	25.0	26.7	28.9
West Midlands	13.6	14.6	16.1	17.1	18.1	19.4	20.6	22.2
East	28.1	30.1	32.3	34.3	37.3	40.5	43.7	47.6
London ^(a)	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
South East	41.9	45.5	50.6	55.0	59.5	63.4	67.0	71.8
South West	27.0	29.5	32.9	34.3	37.9	41.0	44.4	47.5

Source: BR forms

(a) There are no parish or town councils in London. The figures relate to local precepts issued by the sub-treasurer of the Inner Temple and the under-treasurer of the Middle Temple in the City of London.

Research in 1992 by Aston Business School found that parish precepts accounted for about 60% of the total expenditure by parish and town councils. If this is still the case, then total expenditure in 2005-06 is in the region of £400 million.

In addition to council tax, some parish and town councils receive income from interest receipts, sales, fees and charges, capital receipts and borrowing. In addition, some of them have received grants, such as from the National Lottery, and from the Countryside Agency towards the costs of producing parish plans and parish transport schemes. 41 of the largest parish and town councils are currently subject to the duty of best value under the Local Government Act 1999. These have received a grant of £30,000 per year from 2003-04 towards the costs of carrying out best value duties.

Parishes spend much less, and raise much less in tax, than principal local authorities. But there are many more of them, and they have more councillors overall than principal authorities. Further comparisons between parishes and principal authorities are given in **Table A2b**.

Table A2b: Comparing parish and town councils and principal local authorities

	Parish and town councils ^(a)	Principal local authorities
Number of councils	8,700	456 ^(b)
Approximate number of councillors	70,000	20,000
Population covered: number ^(c)	17 million	50 million
Percentage of England total ^(d)	35%	100%
Spending in 2005/06 funded by council tax ^(e) :		
£	260 million	21,055 million ^(e)
£ per Band D property ^(f)	42	1,199

(a) Most of the figures for parish and town councils are estimates.

(b) This is the sum of the 354 billing authorities and 102 major precepting authorities shown in table 1.6A in Chapter 1.

(c) Some of the population and spending shown for parish and town councils is in parished areas where there is a parish meeting instead of a parish or town council.

(d) The population in parished areas comprises about half of the population of England outside London and metropolitan areas. There are only a few parished areas in metropolitan areas, and none in London.

(e) After capping.

(f) The amounts for parish and town councils and principal local authorities do not sum to the national average area Band D council tax (£1,214). This is because the figure for parish and town councils is calculated as an average across parished areas only, rather than across the whole of England.

A3 Changes in English local authority functions and structure

This annex should be read in conjunction with the sections at the end of **Annexes C** and **D**, which summarise changes in the local government revenue and capital finance systems in recent years respectively.

Changes in the volume of local authority activity (and hence in expenditure and employment) may be associated with the addition or removal of functions, as detailed below; changes in demand for obligatory functions (for example, changes in the number of school-age children); policy changes in relation to discretionary functions (for example, the provision of new leisure centres); or changes in ways of providing the same services (for example, the introduction of computers).

BEFORE THE 1970s

Before the nineteenth century, local government provided few nationwide services: the poor law and highway maintenance (administered mainly by parishes) and the local courts and prisons (administered mainly by county quarter sessions) were the main ones. Other local services were provided as a result of local initiative, based mainly on local Acts of Parliament.

In the nineteenth century, there was a gradual development of systematic, nationwide provision of local government services. Some of these were the result of initiatives by central government (such as most of the public health services) whilst others were developed by local initiatives (such as the municipal gas and electricity undertakings). Some were the result of the work of non-governmental organisations, later taken over by local government bodies (such as primary education).

As the nineteenth century progressed, the tendency to create new specialised agencies for each new service was replaced by a tendency to concentrate services, especially after the creation of county councils in 1888 and county district councils in 1894. At the same time, central government recognised increasingly the need to ensure uniform national standards and created the methods to do so, by guidance, conditional grants, inspectorate appeals systems and default powers.

The introduction of more and more local services was counterbalanced by the transfer of some services to central government (for example, prisons (1872), trunk roads (1930), gas and electricity (1947) and hospitals (1948)). In 1929, the abolition of the Boards of Guardians consolidated local government services in the hands of, in large towns, county borough councils and, in London and the metropolitan counties, the London County Council and metropolitan boroughs. Outside these areas the abolition of the Boards of Guardians consolidated local government services for county councils to county district councils and (in rural districts) parish councils and meetings. This structure endured until, in Greater London, the reform of 1965 (when the Greater London Council was formed) and elsewhere the reforms of 1974.

SINCE 1970

- 1973 Responsibility for upper-tier criminal courts (assizes and quarter sessions) transferred to central government.
- 1 April 1974 Local Government reorganisation outside London: new structure of 6 metropolitan counties and 39 shire counties, divided into 36 metropolitan and 296 non-metropolitan districts, introduced. Responsibility for water and sewerage transferred to water authorities. Ambulance and some health services transferred to health authorities.
- 1 April 1985 London Regional Transport transferred from the local authority sector.
- 1 April 1986 Abolition of Greater London Council and metropolitan county councils. In London, functions transferred to City of London, London Boroughs, Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority, the London Waste Regulation Authority, waste disposal authorities and other bodies such as the London Planning Advisory Committee. In metropolitan areas, functions passed to metropolitan districts, waste disposal authorities (in Merseyside and Greater Manchester) and joint authorities for police, fire and civil defence, and transport. Residuary bodies were set up to wind up the affairs of the abolished councils.
- 26 October 1986 Responsibility for municipal bus services transferred to public transport companies.
- 1986 Introduction of devolved budgets for schools, resulting in the creation of schools as semi-independent institutions.
- 1 April 1987 Responsibility for municipal airports (except Manchester) transferred to public airport companies.
- 1 April 1989 Funding of polytechnics and higher education colleges transferred to the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC).
- 1 Sept 1989 The first Grant Maintained schools came into existence following the 1988 Education Reform Act. These schools were independent of local authority control. They were funded by central government through the Funding Agency for Schools. Part of local authority expenditure on education consisted of payments back to the government for the funding of these schools.
- 1 April 1990 Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) abolished. Responsibility for education in Inner London transferred to London boroughs.
- 1 July 1992 Local Government Commission set up to review the structure of local government in England.
- 1 April 1993 Local authorities became responsible for implementing new legislation on Community Care. Funding of colleges of further education and sixth form colleges transferred from local authorities to the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

- 1 April 1995 The Isle of Wight unitary authority replaced the county council and two district councils. New police authorities were set up in the shire areas taking all policing responsibilities away from county councils.
- 1 April 1996 Unitary authorities were created in Avon, Cleveland, Humberside and North Yorkshire, replacing both shire districts and Avon, Cleveland and Humberside county councils. New combined fire authorities were created in each of these four authorities. Waste regulation became the responsibility of the Environment Agency, resulting in the abolition of the London Waste Regulation Authority.
- 1 April 1997 Unitary authorities were created in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Dorset, Durham, East Sussex, Hampshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Wiltshire, replacing some of the shire districts in these areas. New combined fire authorities were also created in these areas.
- 1 April 1998 Unitary authorities were created in Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Devon, Essex, Hereford and Worcester, Kent, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Shropshire, replacing some shire districts and Berkshire County Council. New combined fire authorities were also created in each of these areas.
- 1 April 1999 Funding of Grant Maintained schools transferred to local authorities.
- 3 July 2000 A new Greater London Authority (GLA) was created which consists of a directly elected Mayor, a separately elected Assembly and about 400 support staff, and four functional bodies. The four functional bodies are:
- (i) The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) oversees policing in London (excluding the City). An entirely new local authority, the Receiver for the Metropolitan Police having been abolished.
 - (ii) The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) is essentially a reconstitution of the old London Fire and Civil Defence Authority (LFCDA).
 - (iii) Transport for London (TfL) has strategic responsibility for transport in London; TfL also has responsibility for London buses and it is also highway and traffic authority for certain major roads in London.
 - (iv) The London Development Agency (LDA) promotes economic development and regeneration in London.
- 1 April 2001 Magistrates' courts in London became the responsibility of the Greater London Magistrates' Court Authority.
- 1 April 2002 Funding of sixth form education transferred from local authorities to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

- 15 July 2003 Control of London Underground was transferred from the Department for Transport to Transport for London.
- 1 April 2004 Combined fire authorities in shire areas become major precepting authorities, having previously been financed by payments from the county or unitary councils in their area.
- 1 March 2005 The New Forest National Park came into existence.
- 1 April 2005 Responsibility for magistrates' courts transferred from local authorities to Her Majesty's Courts Service.

