

Annex C

Changes in English Local Authority Functions and Structure

This annex should be read in conjunction with Annexes D and E, 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); others were developed by local initiatives (such as the municipal gas and electricity undertakings); yet others 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 services 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

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| 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. |
| 1981 | Introduction of compulsory tendering for local authority construction work following the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980. |

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 are schools which are independent of local authority control. They are funded by central government through the Funding Agency for Schools. Part of local authority expenditure on education consists of payments back to the government for the funding of these schools. The amounts that are repaid are shown in the tables in chapter 3.
1 April 1990	Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) abolished. Responsibility for education in Inner London transferred to London Boroughs. Proportion of mandatory student award financed by central government increased to 100%.
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 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 the Avon, Cleveland and the 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, Buckingham, 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, Hertford 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 4 functional bodies. The 4 functional bodies are: -
- (1) the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) - which oversees policing in London (excluding the City) [this is an entirely new local authority, the receiver for the Met Police having been abolished]
 - (2) The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) - which is essentially a reconstitution of the old London Fire and Civil Defence Authority (LFCDA)
 - (3) Transport for London (TfL) - which has strategic responsibility for transport in London; TfL also has responsibility for London buses and, in 2001 is expected to have responsibility for London Underground Ltd; it is also highway and traffic authority for certain major roads in London.
 - (4) The London Development Agency (LDA) - which promotes economic development and regeneration in London.