



Department for Transport

Ruth Cadbury MP
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From the Parliamentary
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Dear Ruth,

INTRODUCTION OF THE ENGLISH DEVOLUTION AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT BILL

I am writing to inform you that today the Government is introducing to Parliament the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.

The English Devolution White Paper, published in December 2024, set out the need for nothing less than a completely new way of governing – a generational project of determined devolution. The Bill is wide-ranging and, together with the Bus Services (No. 2) Bill and forthcoming rail legislation, will deliver on many of the commitments we made in that White Paper. I would like to bring to your attention the transport measures in the Bill which, together, will ensure a consistent approach to strategic authorities' transport functions within a standardised devolution framework, empowering local leaders to deliver these vital public services.

Strategic authorities: transport planning

The Bill makes strategic authorities the sole local transport authority for their area, ensuring that key functions are delivered at the most appropriate level. This aligns transport planning with other strategic decision-making functions.

It is important that planning is aligned across the strategic authority's area. The Bill will make the requirement for constituent authorities to implement the

local transport plan universal, ensuring joined-up collaboration within strategic authority areas.

Strategic authorities: grants and levies

Constituent authorities will continue to play a key role in delivering transport, including as the highways authority for their area. The Bill ensures that new strategic authorities can pay grants for the delivery of projects or to fulfil highways maintenance functions.

Conversely, strategic authorities are not currently part of the local government finance settlement. There are instances therefore, where a strategic authority operates a function, such as travel concessions, for which they need to be able to levy funding from their constituent authorities. This Bill allows them all to do so.

These are already standard powers for existing strategic authorities and support effective delivery in these places.

Delegation of functions relating to trunk roads and agreement for doing certain work

The Secretary of State can currently delegate functions in relation to roads in the strategic road network ("trunk roads") to certain highways authorities, allowing them to deliver, for example, local projects that intersect with trunk roads. The Bill allows delegation of such functions to strategic authorities to enable them to better manage their local roads.

The Bill also gives strategic authorities the power to enter agreements with National Highways and other highways authorities to support their work.

Powers and duties over the key route network

Mayors will be required to propose the designation of a *key route network* – a network of important local roads in an area - where they do not have one, allowing them to take a strategic approach to the management of these roads. The Bill also transfers the duty of local traffic authorities to make reports on traffic on these roads to the strategic authority, although responsibility for highways and traffic functions themselves will not change.

Mayors will also gain a power of direction over the key route network, allowing them to direct their highway and traffic authorities in the use of their powers on key route network roads, where necessary to support delivery of their local transport plan. Mayoral strategic authorities will pay the costs of any directions.

On-street micromobility regulatory framework

The growth of shared cycle schemes can bring real benefits and help achieve local and national transport objectives. We would like to see more of these schemes across the country; however, local leaders lack the powers to maximise the benefits of these schemes and ensure they are not having negative impacts on the wider community.

That is why the Bill creates a legal requirement for these services to be licensed by local leaders. The Bill balances minimum standard licence conditions (providing consistency and certainty) with additional local conditions set by those best placed to ensure schemes align with local interests and priorities.

This will ensure that the future growth of this exciting transport option is sustainable and delivers maximum benefit for our communities.

Civil enforcement of traffic contraventions

To free up police time, many local authorities in England can issue penalty charge notices to drivers who disobey certain traffic signs, such as those indicating bus lanes, 'no entry', banned turns, access restrictions, and yellow box junctions. The Secretary of State must approve requests from authorities to take on these powers. In areas where this has not happened, enforcement of traffic restrictions of this sort remains a matter for the police.

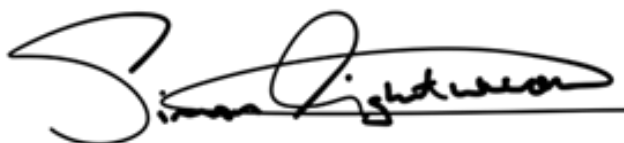
To support joined-up management of road traffic areas, the Bill allows strategic authorities to apply for these powers, if they already have designated enforcement powers.

Restrictions on disposal of operational land by Transport for London

The Bill supports housing development in the capital by devolving the requirement for consent to TfL dispose of operational land from the Secretary of State to the Mayor of London in most circumstances.

Throughout the Bill's passage, the Government will continue to engage closely with England's Mayors, via the Mayoral Council, and local authorities, via the Leaders Council. I look forward to continuing working in partnership to drive growth and ensure people across the whole country benefit, as we deliver on our commitment to empower communities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Lightwood', written over a horizontal line.

SIMON LIGHTWOOD MP

MINISTER FOR LOCAL TRANSPORT