

Mayoral Elections Masterclass

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Association

City Region Mayoral Elections 2017

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The Regions – a short history

- London's mayor (elected in 2000) was partly a replacement for the GLC, partly co-incident with devolution to Scotland, Wales
 - Non 'city regional' mayors introduced elsewhere in England
- Regional policy for the rest of England doomed after 2004 North East referendum
 - No 78% Yes 22%
- 'City regions' as a policy started towards the end of the Blair-Brown government
- Cameron/Osborne built on the previous government's policy
- Separately, Greater Manchester had been developing its own 'city regional' economic and policy mechanism
- Osborne adopted this and evolved the 'Northern Powerhouse'
- City-regional mayors made a condition of greater devolution to combined authorities

Implied government concern re devolution and related policies

Mentions of devolutionary concepts in UK Budget documents			
	Devolution	Northern Powerhouse	Mayor
March 2013	1	0	1
March 2014	0	0	1
March 2015	19	10	7
Summer 2015	25	9	12
March 2016	49	24	19
March 2017	8	1	0

Interim mayor/chair

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	Con
Greater Manchester	Lab
Liverpool City Region	Lab
Tees Valley	Lab
West of England/Bristol	Con
West Midlands/Birmingham	Con

Implications from London

Turnouts can vary, but are generally above those of local government:

2000	2004	2008	2012	2016
34.4	36.9	45.3	38.1	45.3

With no district elections in metropolitan areas this year, the mayoral contest will be the only one – except in Cambridgeshire

Mayoral elections have been personality-driven

- Livingstone vs Norris x2
- Johnson vs Livingstone x2
- Khan vs Goldsmith

This has squeezed other candidates and created 'Forced choice' between Labour and Conservatives. Is a similar effect likely elsewhere?

Elections are fought on manifestos but generally the elected mayor is popular. Livingstone, Johnson and Khan have been forced by the electoral system to adopt centrist, 'boosterist', policy.

There have been only marginal differences in approach to key issues:

- Transport: more lines; more investment
- Housing: more homes; more 'affordable' homes
- Planning: pro-growth; pro-business; open to the world

Being mayor can make you very popular



Sample Size: 1042 London Adults
Fieldwork: 24th - 28th March 2017

	Voting Intention				EU Ref 2016		Vote in 2015 GE				Gender		Age				Social Grade		Inner/Outer			
	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Remain	Leave	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Male	Female	18-24	25-49	50-64	65+	ABC1	C2DE	Inner London	Outer London		
Weighted Sample	1042	238	292	98	68	499	335	279	350	62	66	509	533	120	566	212	144	615	427	341	701	
Unweighted Sample	1042	241	276	111	65	516	322	250	325	74	69	443	599	108	546	243	145	697	345	340	690	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%

Do you think that Sadiq Khan is doing well or badly as Mayor of London?

Very well	17	6	27	42	2	27	6	10	28	17	6	16	18	21	19	13	10	19	14	24	14
Fairly well	41	41	50	47	8	50	29	42	45	63	16	40	42	39	38	45	47	44	37	39	42
TOTAL WELL	58	47	77	89	10	77	35	52	73	80	22	56	60	60	57	58	57	63	51	63	56
Fairly badly	12	18	10	3	32	5	22	12	10	8	28	15	9	11	11	13	17	12	13	10	13
Very badly	11	20	3	3	46	4	23	16	5	5	35	15	7	2	12	11	14	10	11	7	12
TOTAL BADLY	23	38	13	6	78	9	45	28	15	13	63	30	16	13	23	24	31	22	24	17	25
Don't know	19	15	10	5	13	13	19	19	13	7	14	14	24	27	20	17	12	15	25	19	19

London: city state?

- The 'single constituency' for the mayor appears to have generated a more powerful civic identity for London. Reinforced by the 2016 referendum vote.
- But not quite enough (yet) to give London sufficient power to deliver Scotland or Wales-style devolution
- Might the new collective of city mayors become a lobby for 'English devolution'?

City Region Mayoral Elections 2017

John Curtice, University of Strathclyde

Elections are being held on 4 May for six new city region mayors. These are the initial products of the UK government's plans for 'devolution deals', under which local authorities are invited to create a combined authority that takes on a number of strategic responsibilities, such as transport and planning, for a 'region' and is run by a directly elected mayor and a cabinet of local council leaders. (One unitary authority, Cornwall, has also secured a devolution deal for just its area and without having a directly elected Mayor.) The policy is particularly associated with the former Chancellor, George Osborne.

After outlining the six regions in question and the electoral system that will be used, this briefing considers:

- i) The prospects for the parties in the six contests
- ii) The candidates who are expected to stand
- iii) The prospects for turnout

The Regions

The six areas in which mayoral elections are being held are: -

Cambridgeshire (all councils in Cambridgeshire county plus Peterborough unitary authority)

Greater Manchester (all councils in Greater Manchester metropolitan county)

Liverpool City (all councils in Merseyside metropolitan county)

Tees Valley (all councils in the county of Cleveland plus Darlington)

West Midlands (all councils in West Midlands metropolitan county)

West of England (all councils in the county of Avon, less North Somerset)

It might be noted that in all six instances the new combined authority reverses a fragmentation of the structure of local government that took place in the 1980s and 1990s. The Greater Manchester, Liverpool City and West Midlands regions provide these areas with a county wide level of elected government that was lost with the abolition of the metropolitan county councils in 1986. Tees Valley brings together all the councils in Cleveland, while also encompassing Darlington (in Durham), and the West of England brings together three of the four authorities (focused on Bristol) in Avon; both Cleveland and Avon county councils were abolished in 1996. Meanwhile, until it became a unitary authority in 1998, Peterborough also formed part of the area administered by Cambridgeshire county council.

The Election

Like all previous elections for directly-elected mayors that have been held in the UK, the election is being held using the supplementary vote electoral system. Voters are invited to express a first and a second preference. In the event that no candidate wins at least 50% of the valid vote plus one, all but the top two candidates are eliminated from the count and the first preferences cast for all other candidates are redistributed in accordance with the second preferences expressed by their voters. There is no obligation on voters to express a second preference, and they may, of course, cast a second preference for a candidate who has also been eliminated from the count. The table below underlines this point. It shows the proportion of first preference votes that were reallocated in all those directly elected mayors held outside of London in the last four years where no candidate won over half the vote. Apart from one instance, Copeland in 2015, when just one candidate was eliminated, the proportion of votes that has been reallocated has on average been just 38.5%.

	Year	% votes transferred
Bristol	2016	37.5
Bedford	2016	35.4
Mansfield	2015	38.0
Middlesborough	2015	42.8
Torbay	2015	32.1
Copeland	2015	74.2
Watford	2014	46.5
Doncaster	2013	37.2

Political Prospects

Because in most instances the regions encompass whole counties, and because most current parliamentary constituencies are wholly encompassed within a county, it is

possible to ascertain the strength of the political parties in each region simply by aggregating the results of the 2015 general election in the relevant constituencies. The only instance where a city region boundary crosses that of a parliamentary constituency is Sedgefield; the constituency contains a portion of Darlington local council area that lies within the Tees Valley city region but otherwise is outside it. In this instance we have added to the aggregated total for the remaining constituencies in Tees Valley a proportion of the result in Sedgefield that represents the proportion of the constituency's electorate that lies within the district of Darlington.

The following table shows the share of the vote won by each of the principal parties in each city region in the 2015 general election.

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	UKIP	Grn	Top Party
	%	%	%	%	%	
Liverpool City	18.1	61.7	5.5	10.3	3.6	Lab
Greater Manchester	26.4	46.1	7.1	16.1	3.5	Lab
Tees Valley	29.8	43.4	5.2	16.9	2.4	Lab
West Midlands	33.1	42.5	5.5	15.5	2.9	Lab
West of England	36.8	28.1	14.1	11.1	9.5	Con
Cambridgeshire	45.6	21.6	13.2	14.4	4.7	Con

If the parties were still to be as popular as they were at the time of the last election then, barring the intervention of a popular independent candidate, Labour would win four of the new mayoral posts while the Conservatives would win two. However, as the following table shows, opinion polls conducted across Britain as a whole suggest that the Conservatives are more popular and Labour less popular than they were two years ago.

	2015	2017	Difference
	%	%	
Con	38	43	+5
Lab	31	27	-4
Lib Dem	8	10	+2
UKIP	13	11	-2
Grn	4	4	0

2017: Average of most recent poll conducted by ComRes, gfkNOP, ICM, Ipsos MORI, Opinium and YouGov

If the popularity of the parties in each city region were to move up and down in line with the figures in the final column this table, then the Conservatives and Labour would be neck and neck with each other, with the former on 38.1% and Labour on 38.5%. In those circumstances the outcome might be determined by the allocation of

second preferences. Given that most of these might well come from UKIP supporters, these might be expected to favour the Conservatives over Labour. It certainly seems likely that this will be the closest of the mayoral races, although the outcome in Tees Valley could also prove closer than Labour might regard as comfortable.

Candidates

One of the arguments put forward in favour of directly-elected mayors is that the creation of such a high profile post can attract high profile individuals who might well be able to secure election on the basis of their personal popularity and who would not otherwise enter local government. Indeed, a number of candidates have been successful in securing election as an independent when they would have been unlikely to have become the leader of a council. Apart from the fact that two such candidates are currently in office in Copeland and Mansfield, independent candidates have previously been elected in Hartlepool, Mansfield, Middlesborough, and Stoke as well as in London.

The set of candidates expected to contest these elections also provide some evidence in support of this expectation. Two sitting Labour MPs are standing, Steve Rotherham in Liverpool and Andy Burnham in Greater Manchester; in so doing they are hoping to follow in the footsteps of Sir Peter Soulsby in Leicester and all three mayors of London to date. In addition, the Labour MEP and former MP, Siôn Simon is standing for Labour in the West Midlands, and the former Liberal Democrat MP, Stephen Williams, in the West of England. Otherwise, however, only the West Midlands contest has attracted a high profile person who has not hitherto been a politician, that is, Andy Street, former manager of John Lewis who is standing for the Conservatives, to which one may wish to add the Liberal Democrat candidate, Beverley Nielsen, an entrepreneur and educator, though she has previously been elected as a local councillor. Otherwise the set of candidates is dominated by local councillors and party activists, including a number of council leaders - Sue Jeffrey (Labour, leader of Redcar & Cleveland), James Palmer (Conservative, East Cambridgeshire) and Sean Anstee (Conservative, Trafford) - who might well be thought not to represent a departure from the kind of person who already holds local office.

Turnout

Another aspiration that has been set out for directly elected mayors is that the creation of an easily comprehensible, high profile electoral contest should serve to encourage more voters to go the polls than is usually the case in local elections. In the following table we show the level of turnout recorded in the most recently held contest in areas outside London that currently have a directly elected mayor, leaving aside those elections held at the same time as the 2015 general election. Where possible, we also

show where the turnout was noticeably higher or lower than in the previous round of council elections held in that area, though in some instances a mayoral election has only been held in parallel with a council election and thus no such comparison can be made.

Council	Year	Turnout (%)
Bristol	2016	44.3 (h)
Liverpool	2016	30.9
Salford	2016	29.1
Watford	2014	36.9 (h)
Doncaster	2013	27.2 (l)
North Tyneside	2013	31.8 (l)
Bedford	2011	47.0
Leicester	2011	40.7 (n/c)
Mansfield	2011	37.4 (n/c)
Middlesborough	2011	36.5 (n/c)
Torbay	2011	41.2 (n/c)

(h) higher than in previous council election (l) lower than in previous council election (n/c) no separate council election

It is evident that mayoral elections have not been particularly successful in persuading voters to go to the polls. None of the examples shown in the table have secured the participation of even approaching half of the registered electorate. Meanwhile, although in a couple of instances the turnout was noticeably higher than in the most recent previous round of local elections, in a couple of instances it was lower.

It might be felt that, covering as they will do, a much larger area than has any previous directly elected mayor outside of London, that voters will regard the new posts as more important and thus more worthy of their participation. Efforts are also being made by central government and the Electoral Commission to promote the elections. But evidently there is no guarantee that these new mayoral elections will prove particularly effective at promoting democratic participation.