

Research Briefing

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The Greater London Authority



Summary

- 1 Establishment and elections
 - 2 How the GLA works
 - 3 Mayoral policy: key areas
 - 4 Additional powers
- Appendix: Powers of the GLA

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Contents

Summary	6
1 Establishment and elections	7
1.1 Establishment	7
1.2 Elections	8
1.3 Voting systems	8
Mayor of London	8
London Assembly	9
2 How the GLA works	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 The Mayor of London	10
2.3 London Assembly	11
2.4 The Mayor's team	12
2.5 Changes to powers and functions	13
The 2007 Act	13
Additional powers granted in 2011	13
2.6 London Finance Commission	14
2.7 Sources of revenue	15
3 Mayoral policy: key areas	17
3.1 Planning	17
3.2 Transport	18
3.3 Air quality	20
3.4 Housing	20
3.5 Mayoral Development Corporations	21
3.6 Economic development	22
3.7 Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime	23
3.8 London Fire Commissioner	23
3.9 Mayoral strategies	24

3.10 Other policies	25
4 Additional powers	26
Appendix: Powers of the GLA	28

Summary

This briefing paper summarises the role and powers of the Mayor of London, including the changes introduced by the [Greater London Authority Act 2007](#). It also describes the role and powers of the London Assembly. It provides explanations of the electoral system and the system of government within the Greater London Authority, including the functioning of transport, planning, police and crime, fire and rescue, and housing policy within the Greater London Authority.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is the democratically elected strategic authority for London. It comprises two distinct parts, the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. It was established in 2000, following a London-wide referendum to approve proposals for an elected London-wide body.

The Mayor is currently elected using the supplementary vote system, where voters have a first and second choice. If no candidate achieves 50% of first choices then all but the top two candidates are eliminated and second choices are taken into account. The Mayor has responsibilities in the areas of transport, policing, fire and rescue, economic development, housing, planning and skills.

The London Assembly has 25 members, elected using the Additional Member system. There are 14 Assembly constituencies, which are made up by combining two or three London boroughs, and the remaining 11 Assembly members are elected from a London-wide 'top-up' list. The Assembly scrutinises the work of the Mayor via committees and plenary sessions.

Both the Mayor and Assembly members are elected every four years. The next scheduled elections are in May 2024. The 2020 elections were postponed to May 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. The current terms of office for the Mayor and Assembly Members were reduced to three years accordingly.

This briefing describes the functioning of transport, planning, police and crime, fire and rescue, and housing policy within the Greater London Authority. It provides details of, and links to, major policy initiatives under the current Mayor, Sadiq Khan. It also sets out recent debates over extending the powers of the Mayor of London, and of the financial powers available to the Mayor.

1 Establishment and elections

1.1 Establishment

The Greater London Authority (GLA) consists of the Mayor of London and the 25-member London Assembly. Both are elected on a four-yearly cycle, with elections on the first Thursday of May. The most recent elections took place on 6 May 2021 (postponed from 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic), and the next are scheduled for 2 May 2024.

The GLA was initially proposed by the Labour Party in opposition in 1996, in the consultative document ‘A Voice for London’. It proposed an executive Mayor and a small, scrutiny-oriented Assembly. This became a manifesto commitment for Labour at the 1997 General Election:

London is the only Western capital without an elected city government. Following a referendum to confirm popular demand, there will be a new deal for London, with a strategic authority and a mayor, each directly elected. Both will speak up for the needs of the city and plan its future.¹

The new Labour Government published a Green Paper entitled ‘New Leadership for London’ in July 1997. This sketched out the Government’s plans for a strong Mayor with a small, ‘strategic’ Assembly to hold the Mayor to account.

The full proposals were confirmed in a March 1998 White Paper entitled A Mayor and Assembly for London. The establishment of the GLA was subject to a referendum: this was the subject of separate legislation via the [Greater London Authority \(Referendum\) Act 1998](#). The referendum took place on 7 May 1998, resulting in a large ‘yes’ vote.²

The Greater London Authority Bill was introduced into Parliament in 1998 (see Library Research Papers [98-115](#), [116](#), and [118](#)) and passed as the [Greater London Authority Act 1999](#). The first elections were held on 4 May 2000. Standing as an independent, Ken Livingstone was elected Mayor and four parties achieved representation in the Assembly.³

¹ See <http://labourmanifesto.com/1997/1997-labour-manifesto.shtml>

² The result was: Yes – 1,230,715 (72.0%); No – 478,413 (28.0%). Turnout was 34.1%.

³ See [the LondonElects website](#) for a historical record of election results for both the Mayor and Assembly.

1.2

Elections

Elections to the Mayor and Assembly take place on the first Thursday in May four years. The elections due for 2020 were postponed to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The next elections will be held in 2024 and then revert to the four year cycle.

Full election results from previous years [can be found on the LondonElects website](#). Table 1 below summarises the winners and runners up in each mayoral election to date. The votes and vote share includes the second votes gained by each of the final two candidates, under the Supplementary Vote system (see below).

Election	Winner			Runner up					
	Name	Party	Votes	Vote share	Name	Party	Votes	Vote share	Turnout
2000	Ken Livingstone	Independent	776,427	57.9%	Steve Norris	Conservative	564,137	42.1%	
2004	Ken Livingstone	Labour	828,390	55.4%	Steve Norris	Conservative	667,180	44.6%	37%
2008	Boris Johnson	Conservative	1,168,738	53.2%	Ken Livingstone	Labour	1,028,966	46.8%	45%
2012	Boris Johnson	Conservative	1,054,811	51.5%	Ken Livingstone	Labour	992,273	48.5%	38%
2016	Sadiq Khan	Labour	1,310,143	56.8%	Zac Goldsmith	Conservative	994,614	43.2%	46%
2021	Sadiq Khan	Labour	1,206,034	55.2%	Shaun Bailey	Conservative	977,601	44.8%	42%

Table 2 below summarises the parties holding the 25 seats of the London Assembly after each election.

Election	Conservative	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Green	UKIP	BNP
2000	9	9	4	3		
2004	9	7	5	2	2	
2008	11	8	3	2		1
2012	9	12	2	2		
2016	8	12	1	2	2	
2021	9	11	2	3		

1.3

Voting systems

Mayor of London

The Mayor is elected by the Supplementary Vote system. Voting consists of two crosses: one in a column for the voter's first choice candidate, and one in a column for the second choice candidate. The first choices are counted, and the top two candidates go through to a run-off. The first choice votes for other candidates are then examined, and where those voters have voted for one of the top two as their second choice, their vote is reallocated. The candidate with the largest number of votes following this process is the winner.

On 16 March 2021, the Home Secretary announced that the Government planned to change the voting system for all Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC), Combined Authority Mayors, and the Mayor of London, from the supplementary vote system to the first past the post system.⁴ On 15 September 2021, it announced that this would be done via amendments to the [Elections Bill 2021-22](#).⁵ This followed a commitment in the 2017 Conservative manifesto.⁶

London Assembly

The London Assembly is elected by the Additional Member system. There are 14 single-member constituencies and 11 additional member or “top-up” seats for the whole of Greater London. Voters have one vote for the constituency member and one vote for the “top-up” seats. The “top-up” seats are allocated on the basis of the top-up votes cast, but this takes into account constituency seats won by the relevant party: hence overall party strength in the Assembly is based on the top-up votes cast. In the London Assembly, parties must win at least 5% of the top-up vote to be entitled to a seat.

⁴ [HCWS849](#), 16 March 2021

⁵ [HCWS289](#), 15 September 2021

⁶ Conservative Party, [Forward Together: Our Plan for a Stronger Britain and a Prosperous Future](#), 2017, p43. The issue is not mentioned directly in the 2019 Conservative manifesto, [Get Brexit Done: Unleash Britain's Potential](#), 2019. For further details see the Library briefing paper [Elections Bill: instructions to the Public Bill Committee](#), 17 Sep 2021

2 How the GLA works

2.1 Introduction

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is a unique authority in the government of the UK. Although it is often described as an example of ‘devolution’, inviting comparison with the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales, and Northern Ireland Assembly, its powers are very limited compared to those bodies. Section 3 provides additional information about the GLA’s areas of competence.

There are several distinctions in law between the GLA and a local authority. For instance, local authority mayors must select a cabinet from the council and must have their budget passed by a majority on the council; their decisions may also be called in by the council. None of these requirements apply to the GLA. Similarly, it is not an upper-tier local authority with service delivery responsibilities, like county councils. This role is still fulfilled by the London boroughs, which are unitary local authorities.

The GLA is made up of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, which are distinct parts of the Authority with distinct roles.

2.2 The Mayor of London

The Mayor of London is responsible for a broad range of government functions within London. These include:

- Transport for London (TfL);
- The Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC);
- the London Fire Commissioner (LFC);
- two Mayoral Development Corporations;
- housing funding and spatial planning.

The Mayor is required to produce a number of statutory strategy documents, intended to serve as a policy direction for the public (and private and voluntary) sectors. In still other areas, the Mayor has the power to appoint members to certain public body boards, but s/he has no direct influence over the powers or budgets that those boards control. The GLA has a functional power of competence, which may be used to promote economic and social

development and environmental improvements within London.⁷ The Mayor has no power over a number of central government bodies, such as the National Health Service, the Arts Council, various environmental agencies, funding for schools, and much skills-related funding.

The 1999 Act requires the Mayor to hold two public People's Question Time events per year; and Mayor's Question Times, in front of the Assembly, take place 10 times per year.

2.3 London Assembly

The London Assembly is a unique structure of governance in the UK. It has established [a number of committees](#), which undertake 'investigations'. These are, in essence, overview and scrutiny processes, covering both matters that are internal to the GLA (and its subsidiary bodies such as Transport for London) and outside the GLA's responsibilities. Section 59 of the 1999 Act permits the Assembly to investigate "any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Greater London".

Assembly committees use many tools that are familiar from committee structures in other elected authorities, such as public hearings, letters to external agencies, media coverage, and rapporteurs (where a single elected member leads an investigation and report).

The Mayor is not obliged to appoint a 'cabinet' from the Assembly, in the manner of an elected mayor or leader in an English local authority. The Mayor must appoint an Assembly member as the statutory deputy mayor: the deputy would act if the Mayor was suddenly unable to fulfil the role.

The Assembly does not have the power to 'call in' decisions that is available to overview and scrutiny structures in English local authorities.⁸ The Assembly may amend the Mayor's annual budget, or a Mayoral strategy, on a two-thirds majority. Other than this, it has no sanctions with which to stop the Mayor taking action.⁹

The Assembly's role is to hold the Mayor and his/her key advisers to account on a regular basis. It organises itself into subject-based scrutiny committees, taking evidence and publishing reports.¹⁰ It also has a budget, audit and standards committee, and a Confirmation Hearings Committee. The latter is

⁷ See the [Greater London Authority Act 1999](#), s. 30 (2)

⁸ The power of 'call-in' allows local authority councillors, under certain circumstances, to require executive decisions to be re-examined by a committee, or the full council, before they can be implemented.

⁹ No such rejection has ever taken place. So far, only the 2004 mayoralty has seen less than one-third of Assembly members come from the Mayor's own party. During that period, the significance of the power to reject the budget lay in its threat rather than its use. The power to reject strategies was introduced in the [Localism Act 2011](#).

¹⁰ See the Assembly's [Investigating for Londoners webpage](#) for a list of current scrutiny investigations.

entitled to hold confirmation hearings for a range of key Mayoral appointments, though it has no power to veto them.¹¹ A ‘GLA Oversight Committee’ acts as a business management committee for the Assembly. It also monitors the Assembly’s spending (which is distinct from that of the GLA as a whole), and has addressed a small number of more controversial matters that did not fall clearly into other committees’ remits.

2.4 The Mayor’s team

The Mayor may appoint two political advisers and eleven other staff.¹² These appointments are described as ‘deputy mayors’, or as the ‘Mayoral cabinet’. The Mayor must appoint one statutory ‘deputy mayor’, who must be a member of the Assembly, and who would act if the Mayor was suddenly unable to do so. They may also appoint a statutory Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, and may designate one of the eleven as Deputy Mayor for Fire.¹³ The latter two persons may be Assembly members.

Table 3: deputy mayors and portfolios, 2022

Joanne McCartney AM	Statutory deputy mayor / education
Jules Pipe	Planning, Regeneration and Skills
Rajesh Agrawal	Business
Tom Copley	Housing
Seb Dance	Transport
Sophie Linden	Policing and crime
Debbie Weekes-Bernard	Communities and Social Justice
Shirley Rodrigues	Environment and energy
Justine Simons	Culture
Fiona Twycross	Fire and resilience

Additionally, the Mayor appoints the chairs of the Mayoral Development Corporations (see section 3.4). The chair of the London Legacy Development Corporation is Sir Peter Hendy, and the chair of the Old Oak and Park Royal Corporation is Liz Peace.

¹¹ The appointments covered are: the chair and deputy chair of Transport for London, chair of a mayoral development corporation; chair of LFEPA; chair of the Cultural Strategy Group; chair of the London Waste and Recycling Board; chair or deputy chair of the London Pensions Fund Authority.

¹² [Greater London Authority Act 1999](#), s. 67

¹³ See the [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) section 9; [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#) schedule 2

2.5

Changes to powers and functions

The 2007 Act

In late 2005, the Labour Government announced a review of the GLA. A report was published in 2006,¹⁴ leading to the [Greater London Authority Act 2007](#) (see Library Research Papers [06-060](#) and [06-061](#)). Key additional powers conferred by this Act were:

- the establishment of a London Board within the Housing Corporation (land acquisition and social housing has since been fully devolved to the GLA – see below);
- the establishment of the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB – since abolished);
- additional planning powers in relation to projects of strategic importance;
- power for the Mayor to appoint political party representatives to the board of Transport for London; and
- power for the Assembly to hold non-binding confirmation hearings for a small number of specified senior posts.

Additional powers granted in 2011

The [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#) introduced Police and Crime Commissioners across England and Wales. The 2011 Act adjusted the governance of policing in London so that it broadly reflected the changes elsewhere. In London, the Mayor is automatically the Police and Crime Commissioner, heading up the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC: see section 3.5). The London Assembly is required to set up a Policing and Crime Panel to scrutinise MOPAC, equivalent to the panels set up to cover other police force areas. MOPAC's predecessor, the Metropolitan Police Authority, was abolished.

The [Public Bodies Act 2011](#) abolished the London Development Agency (LDA), a functional body set up under the 1999 Act. Some of its residual powers were absorbed into the GLA.

Additional powers provided to the Mayor under the [Localism Act 2011](#) were:

- taking on the land acquisition and social housing powers of the Homes and Communities Agency for London, including receiving grant from central government for housing purposes;
- maintaining the Economic Development Strategy after the LDA was abolished;
- the power to establish Mayoral Development Corporations for specified areas;

¹⁴ DCLG, [The Greater London Authority. The Government's final proposals for additional powers and responsibilities for the Mayor and Assembly](#), 2006

- the introduction of a London Environment Strategy to replace five previous statutory strategies;
- The London Assembly was given the power to reject Mayoral strategies on a two-thirds majority.

2.6

London Finance Commission

The then Mayor, Boris Johnson, established the London Finance Commission in July 2012, to examine potential additional sources of revenue for the GLA. It produced a report, [Raising the Capital](#), in May 2013. The report proposed that all property taxation within London, including business rates, council tax, capital gains tax, annual tax on enveloped dwellings¹⁵ and stamp duty, should be fully devolved to the GLA. This would include powers for the GLA to change council tax band levels and conduct revaluations of domestic property (neither of which has been done since council tax was introduced in 1991). One hundred per cent of business rates would be retained in London, under an adjusted version of the Business Rates Retention Scheme (BRRS); and the GLA would set the business rate multiplier. There would also be “freedom to use business rates to undertake ‘Enterprise Zone’ style interventions”.¹⁶ The retention of the revenues from these sources would be offset by a commensurate reduction in central government funding for GLA functions.¹⁷

The report also proposed more local flexibility for fees and charges, many of which are set by national scales; and a more general power to introduce ‘smaller’ local taxes:

We received evidence about a number of smaller new taxes, notably a tourist tax and environmental taxation. The international evidence we received suggested that all the other cities reviewed had one or more tax of this kind, including levies on sales, betting and alcohol. A tourism tax would seem to have particular potential in London because of the size and particular needs of the leisure and tourism industry. If the city’s cultural, tourist and entertainment industry are to flourish, there is a powerful argument for a levy that could then be reinvested in marketing and urban realm improvements. Similarly, allowing London government to introduce levies on, say, environmentally detrimental or unhealthy activity could assist in delivering wider public good objectives. We support the maximum discretion for the GLA and London boroughs in the use of such levies.¹⁸

In July 2016 the Mayor, Sadiq Khan, reconvened the London Finance Commission in the wake of the June 2016 vote to leave the European Union. It

¹⁵ This is a tax on company-owned homes worth over £2 million.

¹⁶ London Finance Commission, [Raising the capital](#), 2013, p. 69

¹⁷ This idea has been revisited recently by London First in the context of raising money for the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme.

¹⁸ London Finance Commission, [Raising the capital](#), 2013, p. 71

produced an interim report in October 2016, largely restating the conclusions it reached in its 2013 report [Raising the Capital](#).¹⁹

Its final report, [Devolution: a capital idea](#), was published in January 2017. The report recommended the devolution of several taxes to London government, such as stamp duty, Air Passenger Duty, Vehicle Excise Duty, together with a share of income tax and VAT revenue. A tourism tax was also proposed. The report stated that any tax devolution would be ‘revenue neutral’ at the point at which tax powers were passed to Greater London.

2.7 Sources of revenue

The GLA has a number of sources of revenue. Many of these relate to transport: where this is the case, in practice the revenue passes to Transport for London rather than the GLA itself:

- Council tax precepts – an extra sum collected from council tax-payers. The total collected is around £1 billion annually. This included an ‘Olympic precept’ from 2005-06 to 2015-16;²⁰
- Three transport-related levies, provided for by the 1999 Act: road pricing (the congestion charge), an emissions levy (the Low Emission Zone), and the Ultra Low Emission Zone.²¹ The GLA also has the power to introduce a workplace parking levy, which it has not used to date;
- [Transport for London](#) benefits from fare revenue, against which it can borrow to a limited degree, alongside the borrowing powers available to the Mayor himself. Road pricing revenue from the Congestion Charge and the Low Emissions Zones goes direct to TfL: this made up approximately £400 million in 2019-20. TfL also has substantial commercial income, of some £300 million gross annually from advertising, car parking and property rental;
- The GLA retains 37% of business rates revenue in London.²² This is a pilot scheme that has been in place since 2017-18. As a result the GLA does not currently receive revenue support grant or fire and rescue funding, and Transport for London receives no direct grant funding from the Government (see the Library briefing note [Reviewing and reforming local government finance](#) for more details). The GLA will consequently retain 37% of any increase in rate revenue;

¹⁹ See GLA, [London Finance Commission](#)

²⁰ Before the GLA’s existence, separate precepts were imposed by the Metropolitan Police and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. The ‘Olympic precept’ had no separate legal existence.

²¹ TfL, [Ultra Low Emission Zone](#)

²² The London boroughs retain 30%, making a ‘local share’ of 67%. This compares with a local share of 50% in most parts of England.

- The GLA receives some £2.3 billion in policing grant from the Home Office. This funding must be spent on policing. A portion of the council tax precept is also collected in respect of policing and is ring-fenced;
- A [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) was introduced from 1 April 2012 ('MCIL1'), and the charges were overhauled in 2019 ('MCIL2'). This is payable on new developments in London, and the revenue is currently used for Crossrail. The rates in 2019 were [£80, £60 or £25 per square metre](#), depending on which borough the development is in. Office, retail and hotel developments in central London and the Isle of Dogs were charged £185, £165 and £140 per square metre respectively in 2019. These rates are updated annually for inflation. Health and education-related properties are exempt;
- A supplementary business rate of 2p in the pound, lasting 25 years, was introduced from February 2010, on all businesses in Greater London with a rateable value over £55,000. The funding is being used for [Crossrail](#).²³ Crossrail has also been funded via the MCIL (see above), via section 106 contributions, and via borrowing of some £1 billion from the Public Works Loan Board. This borrowing is to be paid back from future increases in business rate receipts – a 'tax increment financing' scheme.
- Transport for London operates a lane rental scheme, to encourage consolidation of roadworks and minimise disruption to road users. This has operated since 2012. The gross income of the scheme is in the low millions of pounds per year. The bulk of this is spent on local transport schemes.²⁴

²³ See Greater London Authority, [Crossrail Business Rates Supplement Q&A](#), February 2010, p.29

²⁴ See the annual [Transport for London Lane Rental Scheme](#) monitoring reports

3 Mayoral policy: key areas

This section outlines the main areas of Mayoral policy which impact significantly on the lives of Londoners.

3.1 Planning

The Mayor is required to produce a Spatial Development Strategy (known as the London Plan). This sets out an integrated economic, environmental and transport framework for the development of London. The current version [was published in March 2021](#). The previous version [dated from July 2011](#).

The Secretary of State exercised reserve powers to direct changes to the London Plan in early 2020. These may be exercised when aspects of the Plan are not in conformance with national policy (see section 337 of the 1999 Act). The details of the direction, the changes made in response, and the final document [can be found on the GLA's website](#).

The Mayor has powers to intervene in applications of 'potential strategic importance' submitted to London boroughs. These are governed by the [Town and Country Planning \(Mayor of London\) Order 2008](#) (SI 2008/580), as amended. The criteria for an application of 'potential strategic importance' include:

- development of 150 residential units or more;
- development over 30 metres in height (outside the City of London);
- development on Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land.

If an application is referred to the Mayor of London, the relevant London Borough planning authority would normally indicate to the Mayor whether or not it is minded to approve the application. The Mayor can then do one of three things:

- Allow the London borough to determine the planning application;
- Direct the London borough to refuse the planning application;
- "Call in" the planning application.²⁵

The Mayor may issue a direction to call in an application of potential strategic importance if all of the following criteria are met:

²⁵ See the [Town and Country Planning \(Mayor of London\) Order 2008](#) (SI 2008/580)

- The development or any of the issues raised by it are of such a nature or scale that it would have a significant impact on the implementation of the London Plan;
- The development or any of the issues raised by it have significant effects that are likely to affect more than one London borough;
- There are sound planning reasons for issuing a direction.

During his tenure as Mayor between 2008 and 2016, Boris Johnson used the power to call in 17 times.²⁶ From taking office in May 2016 through to January 2022, Sadiq Khan had used the power 27 times.²⁷

3.2 Transport

Transport for London (TfL) [is a statutory body](#), established by the Greater London Authority Act 1999. The Mayor has a general duty to develop and apply policies to promote and encourage safe, integrated and efficient transport facilities and services to, from and within London. The Mayor currently chairs TfL.²⁸ The Mayor must produce a [transport strategy](#). TfL has responsibility for the London Underground, Docklands Light Railway, buses, trams, regulation of taxis and private hire vehicles, riverboat services and piers, cycling superhighways and a cycle hire scheme (Santander Cycles), and the Emirates Air Line (a cable car) in East London.

TfL is also the highways authority for the Transport for London Road Network, covering all trunk routes within London with the exception of motorways. Elsewhere in England, trunk roads are managed by Highways England.

In March 2018 the Mayor, Sadiq Khan, published the [Mayor's Transport Strategy](#). It emphasises the need to create streets and street networks that encourage walking, cycling and public transport use. In terms of public transport, the strategy outlines plans to:

- Build Crossrail 2;
- Upgrade and extend the Tube network;
- Create more bus priority schemes across London;
- Make stations and vehicles more accessible.²⁹

The Mayor announced an efficiency savings programme to enable fares on TfL services to be frozen until 2020 and a “Hopper” bus fare, where an additional

²⁶ GLA, [Past public hearings](#)

²⁷ GLA, [Planning applications and decisions: public hearings](#)

²⁸ [Greater London Authority Act 1999](#), schedule 10.

²⁹ TFL, The [Mayor's Transport Strategy](#), accessed 19 April 2018

bus or tram journey can be made for free within one hour of when the customer first touched in.³⁰

The Government announced [a review of Transport for London in July 2020](#), after the Mayor requested large-scale financial assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic. Alongside this, the Mayor announced a separate independent review of TfL.³¹ The Government had agreed to provide initial emergency assistance in May 2020.³² This was followed by two further tranches of emergency funding: a £905 million grant in respect of the period from 18 October 2020 to 31 March 2021, and £1.08 billion in respect of 29 May 2021 to 11 December 2021. The second of these was then extended, with additional funding, to 4 February 2022.³³

Provision of the emergency funding was contingent on the Mayor agreeing to a number of financial actions designed to raise local revenue and control spending, and also to the Mayor agreeing to take forward a number of specified policies. These conditions are set out in the funding agreement letters.³⁴ TfL was also required to accept two additional short-term board appointments by HM Treasury.

An extension of the London Underground's Northern Line, to Nine Elms and Battersea, opened in September 2021. An extension of the London Overground line to Barking Riverside is expected to open in 2022. Through services on the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail), the east to west tunnel through central London, are expected to commence in 2022, having been delayed from their original opening date of 2018. Plans to extend the Bakerloo Line to Lewisham were uncertain in late 2021, in the wake of funding pressures arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

In February 2015 the then Chancellor, George Osborne, announced that TfL would take over rail services between Liverpool Street, Enfield Town, Cheshunt (via Seven Sisters) and Chingford and gain control of most of the stations servicing those routes over the following 5-7 years.³⁵ A consultation was launched in 2016 on transferring services on several additional suburban routes to TfL, including routes stretching some way beyond the Greater London boundary. There has been no response to the consultation, and no further initiatives have appeared to transfer rail services to TfL.³⁶

³⁰ GLA, [First savings found to fund Mayor's fares freeze on TfL services](#), 8 June 2016

³¹ See TfL, [Mayor announces independent review of TfL's long term future funding and financing options](#), 22 July 2020; see also [the review's report, published in December 2020](#).

³² [HCWS240 2019-21](#), 18 May 2020

³³ [HCWS514 2021-22](#), 5 Jan 2022

³⁴ See DfT, [Transport for London settlement letters](#), 1 Nov 2021

³⁵ HMT press notice, "[Long term economic plan for London announced by Chancellor and Mayor of London](#)", 20 February 2015

³⁶ [Railways: Greater London: Written question - HL4450](#), 16 January 2017.

3.3

Air quality

The GLA operates a number of road charging schemes seeking to improve air quality:

- The congestion charge. This was established in February 2002, [covering an area in Central London](#). The initial charge was £5 per day to drive within the zone between 7.30am and 6.30pm: as of January 2022 it is £15, to drive between 7am and 10pm. The zone expanded to the west between February 2007 and December 2010, doubling in size.
- An Ultra-Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ), established in April 2019, covering the same area as the congestion charge. [The ULEZ was extended](#) to the area inside (but not including) the North and South Circular Roads on 25 October 2021. Cars that do not comply with the ULEZ emissions standards must pay £12.50 per day to drive within the ULEZ. It operates 24 hours a day, every day except Christmas Day. Non-compliant vehicles that drive within the congestion charge zone would have to pay both the congestion charge and ULEZ;
- A [Low Emissions Zone for vans, lorries, buses, coaches and specialist diesel vehicles](#). This covers the whole of Greater London and operates 24 hours a day every day. Non-compliant vehicles are charged [£100 or £300 per day](#) to drive within the LEZ;³⁷
- A £10 Emissions Surcharge (dubbed the 'T-charge'), on the most polluting vehicles entering central London, operated between 23 October 2017 and the introduction of the ULEZ;
- A £60 million scrappage scheme, offering grants of up to £2,000 to individuals receiving certain social security benefits to scrap non-compliant cars. This has led to 10,000 cars being scrapped or retrofitted since its introduction in 2019;³⁸
- An [Air Quality Fund](#), including funding for Low Emission Neighbourhoods;
- New taxis must be zero emission capable, as of 1 January 2018, and no new diesel taxis have been licensed since then.

3.4

Housing

The [Localism Act 2011](#) devolved housing strategy and funding to the GLA from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Previously, a joint arrangement saw a separate 'HCA London Board' operating within the HCA. This was chaired by the Mayor and oversaw HCA investment in London in line with the London Housing Strategy.

The [current Housing Strategy](#) dates from August 2018. It lists five priorities: building homes for Londoners; delivering genuinely affordable homes; high

³⁷ TfL, [Air Quality consultation stage 3b](#), February 2018

³⁸ GLA, [Mayor announces an additional £5 million for scrappage scheme](#), 19 Jul 2021

quality homes and inclusive neighbourhoods; a fairer deal for private renters and leaseholders; and tackling homelessness and helping rough sleepers.

The Mayor also published [an Implementation Plan](#) in May 2018. This included committing £250 million to the Mayor's Land Fund and scaling up the GLA's capacity around assembling land for housing; using land owned by the GLA group of bodies for housing; and setting a target of 649,350 completions in 10 years. An [Affordable Homes Programme](#) will run from 2021 to 2026, with £4 billion of funding from the Government.

3.5 Mayoral Development Corporations

The [Localism Act 2011](#) permits the Mayor to set up Mayoral Development Corporations (MDCs). There are currently two MDCs: the London Legacy Development Corporation, which has been set up to manage the site of the 2012 Olympic Games, and the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation, which has been set up to create a transport interchange where HS2 meets Crossrail.

The Mayor may make an MDC the planning authority for its area, and it may provide infrastructure: this is widely defined to include roads, utilities, health and educational facilities, and community and recreational facilities. It can acquire land, and do so by compulsory purchase if authorised by the Secretary of State.

The [London Legacy Development Corporation](#) (LLDC) went live on 1 April 2012, inheriting some staff and land from the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation and the Olympic Delivery Authority. It became the planning authority for its area from 1 October 2012,³⁹ and operates a community infrastructure levy (CIL). This came into effect in April 2015, and it is used to fund infrastructure which will support the regeneration of the Legacy Corporation's area. It is payable over and above the Mayor of London's own CIL.

Following a [consultation process](#) in 2014, the then Mayor, Boris Johnson, launched a new MDC, the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation, in April 2015. This too is the planning authority for its area. The corporation leads on developing an interchange station between Crossrail and the proposed HS2 high speed rail line. OPDC does not currently operate a community infrastructure levy. It was subject to a formal review by Sadiq Khan in June 2016, shortly after he took office. The subsequent report was critical of Boris Johnson for “rushing headlong’ into an agreement with

³⁹ See the [London Legacy Development Corporation \(Planning Functions\) Order 2012](#) (SI 2012/2167). See the [LLDC's website](#) for further details on the Corporation's planning role.

Government to transfer land at Old Oak that was made on unfavourable terms compared to other major regeneration schemes in the country”.⁴⁰

3.6 Economic development

A single Local Enterprise Partnership for London, the [‘London Economic Action Partnership’](#), is hosted within the GLA. This also manages the [London Business Hub](#), one of a national network of ‘growth hubs’. The residual functions of the London Development Agency were merged into the GLA under section 191 of the [Localism Act 2011](#).⁴¹ They have been combined with the management of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which transferred from the LDA into the GLA on 1 July 2011.⁴² London’s share of the ERDF and the European Social Fund (ESF) totalled some €750 million over the 2014-2020 programming period.

The Mayor published [an economic strategy for London](#) in December 2018. It focused on early years and careers guidance; promoting training and further education, in particular to under-represented groups and the long-term unemployed; improving (transport) accessibility and making private renting more affordable; promoting fairness at work and relaunching the London Healthy Workplace Charter; and addressing food insecurity and fuel poverty; community participation, active citizenship and confronting terrorism.

The GLA’s economic development activities include the [Smart London board and the GLA’s Chief Digital Officer](#), which lead on the “implementation of new digital technologies across London’s infrastructure, utilities and public services and the role of technology and data in all Mayoral strategies and policies”. They also include [several food-related programmes](#), which are administered by the London Food Board in accordance with the London Food Strategy; and [London & Partners](#), a not-for-profit body, which handles foreign direct investment, tourism, and advertising of university opportunities.

The Mayor has adopted a “London living wage” for the bodies in the GLA Group, and 2,500 other organisations have signed up to implement it. An initial GLA report in May 2009 set the London living wage at £7.60 per hour (compared to the then National Minimum Wage of £5.73 per hour). In early 2022 it is £11.05 per hour, compared to the National Living Wage of £8.91 per hour.⁴³

⁴⁰ GLA, [Mayor reveals ‘mess’ left at Old Oak Common in review findings](#), November 2016

⁴¹ See [HC Deb 7 Sept 2010, c22WH](#)

⁴² The future management of the ERDF across England was addressed in a written statement on 3 February 2011: [HC Deb 3 Feb 2011 c48-9W](#)

⁴³ GLA, [London Living Wage](#), accessed 19 April 2018

3.7

Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

As noted above, the Mayor is the Police and Crime Commissioner for London. The Mayor must appoint a deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, who is at the head of MOPAC (the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime).

MOPAC must secure the maintenance of the Metropolitan police force and ensure that it is efficient and effective. It must publish a [policing and crime plan](#) at least annually.⁴⁴ The Assembly is required to set up a special-purpose committee called the Policing and Crime Panel, which can scrutinise the plan and require any staff member in the Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime to attend and answer questions.⁴⁵ In March 2017 Sadiq Khan published his [Police and Crime Plan 2017-21](#) which outlined three priorities to be tackled:

- Violence against women and girls
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Hate crime and intolerance

The head of the police force in London, the Metropolitan Police Service Commissioner and their deputy are appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Home Secretary. The Commissioner, currently Cressida Dick, is responsible for the day to day running of the Metropolitan Police.

3.8

London Fire Commissioner

In January 2016, the [Government announced](#) its decision to abolish the previous London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) and make the Mayor directly responsible for fire and rescue services.⁴⁶ This followed a judicial review of LFEPA's decision-making following a dispute with the then Mayor, Boris Johnson, regarding the proposed closure of twelve fire stations.⁴⁷ The [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#) replaced LFEPA with a London Fire Commissioner and a Deputy Mayor for Fire.

[The London Fire Commissioner \(LFC\)](#) was established on 1 April 2018.⁴⁸ The Mayor appointed Dany Cotton as the first Commissioner and Fiona Twycross AM as statutory Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience. As of early 2022 Andy Roe is the London Fire Commissioner.

LFEPA had 17 members: eight from the London Assembly, seven from the London boroughs, and two Mayoral appointees. The chair was appointed by the Mayor from among the 17 members. The distribution of Assembly and

⁴⁴ [Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act](#) 2011, s. 6

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, s. 32-33.

⁴⁶ [HCWMS489](#), 26 January 2016

⁴⁷ See LFEPA, [London fire judicial review ruling](#), 20 December 2013.

⁴⁸ GLA, [The London Fire Commissioner Governance Direction 2018](#)

borough membership was required to reflect the political balance in the Assembly and the boroughs respectively.

3.9 Mayoral strategies

The Mayor must produce seven statutory strategy documents: transport, economic development, housing, spatial development (the London Plan), environment, culture, and health inequalities.

Each strategy has a number of consultation requirements and a statutory procedure governing its creation and publication.⁴⁹ Additionally, when making each strategy, the Mayor must have regard to public health and sustainable development; consult the Assembly, the functional bodies and the boroughs; and make copies of the document available to the public. Each strategy is published in draft before being finalised.

Each strategy is expected to set a direction of travel for London as a whole. The Mayor has executive responsibilities over housing, transport and economic development, but in the policy areas covered by the other strategies, s/he has no power to direct public bodies outside the 'GLA family' to follow the strategy. To the extent that the strategies are 'delivered', this is dependent on Mayoral exhortation, relationships and influence.

The statutory strategies do not necessarily have a higher profile than non-statutory initiatives. Both statutory and non-statutory means may be used to trial new initiatives, to support or strengthen the private or voluntary sectors, and/or to address cross-cutting issues of policy. For three of the strategies – culture, environment, and health inequalities – the Mayor must work with centrally-funded non-departmental public bodies, amongst others, to achieve outcomes.

Culture is the responsibility of the [London Cultural Strategy Group](#), which produced a statutory strategy, [Cultural Metropolis](#), in March 2014.⁵⁰ In December 2018 Sadiq Khan published a new strategy entitled [Culture for all Londoners](#). The Mayor also has appointment rights over the Arts Council's London board and the board of the Museum of London.

The Mayor published the first [London Environment Strategy](#) in May 2018. Two progress reports have subsequently also been published. Prior to 2011, the Mayor was required to produce separate strategies on climate change, air quality, ambient noise, waste and biodiversity. The GLA also provides funding for the [London Sustainable Development Commission](#) and 'ReLondon', the [London Waste and Recycling Board](#),⁵¹

⁴⁹ [Localism Act 2011](#), s.228: for the original procedure, see GLA Act 1999, sections 41-44.

⁵⁰ See [Cultural Metropolis 2014 - The Mayor's culture strategy for London](#).

⁵¹ GLA, [Draft London Environment Strategy, 2017](#)

The [London Health Inequalities Strategy](#) was published in September 2018. An [Implementation Plan](#) was published in December 2021, focusing on public health-related issues such as transport, air quality and mental health (health services in London are the responsibility of the NHS). The Mayor chairs the [London Health Board](#), which includes mayoral appointees and representatives from the health and local government worlds. The Board's terms of reference include improving the health of Londoners through pan-London collaboration; making the case for resources for London's healthcare system; and supporting London government in its statutory responsibilities for health and public health.

In December 2015, the London Health and Care Collaboration Agreement was signed between the Mayor of London and local and national health stakeholders. This has led to five devolution pilot schemes being tested in various London boroughs.⁵² In addition, the Work and Health programme has been devolved to the GLA: similar programmes are operated by mayoral combined authorities elsewhere in England.

3.10

Other policies

- Promotion of **volunteering and mentoring** is led by [Team London](#);
- A [London Land Commission](#) existed from July 2015 to January 2016, bringing together major public sector landholders across London. This was superseded by a [Public Land Team](#) within the GLA, dealing with the assembly of public and private land for development purposes;
- Small amounts of funding are made available for [energy-related schemes](#), addressing fuel poverty, energy switching, boiler scrappage, bulk buying of solar panels, and a Community Energy Fund;
- In March 2018, a memorandum was published entitled [Working Towards Justice Devolution in London](#). This included commitments to devolve responsibilities to the GLA in three key areas – victims and witnesses, reducing reoffending, and managing vulnerable groups such as female and young prisoners – and discussing the devolution of associated financial resources.
- The Adult Education Budget was transferred to the GLA from 2019, in line with a [memorandum of understanding on further devolution to London](#) in March 2017. This budget has also been devolved to Mayoral Combined Authorities elsewhere.

⁵² London Councils, [Health and care devolution in London](#), December 2015

4 Additional powers

Numerous proposals have appeared from think-tanks and from within the GLA family itself for the devolution of additional powers to London. Some additional powers were devolved by the Greater London Authority Act 2007 and by the Localism Act 2011.

In June 2010, following the General Election, the then Mayor, Boris Johnson, wrote to the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government requesting further devolution of a number of powers.⁵³ He sought more control over franchising of suburban rail services, and the devolution of the Royal Parks Agency and the Port of London Authority.

A small number of rail services have been transferred since (see section 3.2 above). No discussions have taken place on the Port of London Authority. In 2011, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) agreed in principle to transfer of the Royal Parks, and committed to legislate “when the opportunity arises”.⁵⁴ A [Written Statement](#) on 18 July 2011 indicated that no legislation would be forthcoming: instead, the Royal Parks Agency would remain an executive agency of DCMS, with an enlarged board appointed by the Mayor.⁵⁵

Several additional proposals have been made for further devolution:

- In July 2015, the Congress of Leaders (the leaders of all the London boroughs and the Mayor of London) made a proposal for further devolution in the areas of employment, skills, business support, crime and justice, health and housing;⁵⁶
- In September 2015 the London Assembly’s Devolution Working Group published a report citing the need for further devolution powers, especially for fiscal, public service, health and criminal justice devolution;⁵⁷
- In November 2015, further powers over skills were sought by the London Enterprise panel;⁵⁸
- In November 2015, a joint document produced by the Mayor, London Councils, and the London LEP, entitled [Skills Devolution to London](#), was submitted to the Government. This contained a series of high-level outcomes sought for the skills system in London by 2020. A further

⁵³ See [The Mayor of London’s Proposals for Devolution](#), June 2010.

⁵⁴ [HCDeb 18 Jan 2011](#) c30-34WS

⁵⁵ [HCDeb 18 Jul 2011](#) c66WS

⁵⁶ London Councils, [Devolution & Public Service Reform Congress of Leaders](#), July 2015

⁵⁷ A New Agreement for London, London Assembly, September 2015

⁵⁸ London Councils / London LEP, [Skills Devolution for London: A Proposal to Government](#), November 2015

document entitled the '[Call for Action](#)' was published in late 2019 by the GLA and London Councils, expanding and reiterating these demands.

- A proposal emerged in 2017 for the GLA to pilot a 'Development Rights Auction Model' (DRAM), a form of 'uplift' or 'land value capture'. The aim was for public bodies to capture some of the increase in land values resulting from public works, such as new stations. Transport for London published a report in March 2018, which suggested that DRAM was unlikely to be successful in London.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Transport for London, [Development Rights Auction Model: Final Report](#), March 2018.

Appendix: Powers of the GLA

Policy area	1999	2007	2011
Transport	Transport for London: Tube, trams, buses, trunk roads, taxi regulation, river services. Power to impose congestion charge, emissions charge, workplace parking levy		Business rate supplement and community infrastructure levy contributing to Crossrail funding
Economic development	London Development Agency (took on Business Link in 2004) Appointment of board		LDA abolished; remaining functions and assets to transfer to GLA, together with EU funding. Single London-wide LEP.
Environment	Strategies on ambient noise; air quality; biodiversity; waste	Climate change mitigation and energy strategy; Waste and Recycling forum and fund Power to direct authorities to have regard to Mayor's waste strategy	Five environmental strategies (noise, air quality, biodiversity, waste, climate change) to become Environment Strategy.

Housing		Chair of the London Housing Board Housing Strategy and Housing Investment Plan: high-level decisions over regional housing funding	Budget and functions of Homes and Communities Agency for London pass to Mayor.
Policing	Mayor appoints and sets budget of Metropolitan Police Authority, the board controlling the Metropolitan Police Service.	Mayor may chair MPA	MPA abolished, Mayoral Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) created. Statutory Assembly Policing and Crime Panel to scrutinise MOPAC.
Fire	London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority: board appointed and budget set by Mayor		London Fire Commissioner (2018)
Culture	Cultural strategy	Appointment of the chair of Arts Council England (London) Appointment of eight board members to the Museum of London	
Planning	Producing London Plan Right to be consulted by boroughs on applications of ‘strategic importance’ Power to reject such applications	Right to determine applications of ‘strategic importance’ Rights to direct boroughs to change their local plans to ensure conformity with London Plan	Mayor only to focus on the largest planning applications
Health		Health inequalities strategy	Creation of London Health Board

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