

## Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill 2015 House of Lords Second Reading briefing

8 June 2015

### Introduction

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This briefing sets out the Electoral Commission's view on key issues arising from the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, ahead of its Second Reading on Monday 8 June. It covers the following:

- Power to provide for elected mayors
- Mayors as Police and Crime Commissioners

The Electoral Commission is an independent body which reports directly to the UK Parliament. We regulate political party and election finance and set standards for well-run elections and referendums. We put voters first by working to support a healthy democracy, where elections and referendums are based on our principles of trust, participation, and no undue influence.

### Power to provide for elected mayors

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The Bill would provide a power for the Government to establish, by Order, directly-elected mayors for specified combined authority areas. The Bill would also provide powers for the Government to specify by Order the detailed rules for the conduct of any new mayoral elections and for the regulation of campaign spending at those elections. The Government must consult the Electoral Commission before making these detailed rules.

**When we are consulted on draft rules for future combined authority mayoral elections, the Electoral Commission will consider and, if appropriate, comment on the practical implications for voters, campaigners and electoral administrators. We would give our views to the Government and Parliament, and would also publish our response on our website.**

**We would expect that any new legislation for directly-elected mayors for combined authority areas should be clear (by the introduction of an Order to Parliament for approval) at least six months before it is required to be implemented or complied with by campaigners, Returning Officers or Electoral Registration Officers.**

## Mayors as Police and Crime Commissioners

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The Bill provides that an elected mayor for a combined authority area may be given authority to undertake the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the area, in place of the previously elected PCC. Where a mayor is to be given those functions, the Bill provides powers for the Government to cancel any scheduled PCC elections in that area, and to extend the existing PCC's term of office until the mayor is in place.

The next scheduled elections for PCCs are due to take place on 5 May 2016 for police areas across England (except London) and Wales. The elections will be held on the same day as the National Assembly for Wales general election and scheduled local government elections in many areas of England. Returning Officers and their staff will already be developing plans for the administration of these scheduled elections, and candidates and campaigners will also be considering their own plans. This will include activity aimed at communicating to voters what elections are taking place in their area and it will be very important that any changes are clarified as early as possible to ensure these plans can be adjusted, and the potential for any voter confusion is minimised.

**We would welcome early confirmation from the Government about whether they anticipate any impact from the provisions of this Bill on the elections already scheduled for May 2016, including the potential impact on any currently elected PCCs or those who may be elected following elections in 2016.**

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For further information, please contact **Lisa Camps**, Public Affairs Officer on 020 7271 0619 or [lcamps@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:lcamps@electoralcommission.org.uk).