

Questions and answer – EMCCA Board – 4 November 2024

Q1 from Ross Levy

Given the Budget is expected to increase the cap on a single bus ticket from two to three pounds, what assurances can be given that EMCCA is going to be able to deliver on ensuring sustainable transport modes are affordable and accessible for commuters in our region?

Mayor Claire's response:

Thank you for your question. My understanding is that, even with the fare cap increasing to £3, passengers will continue to pay significantly less than commercial rates for their bus travel across large parts of the EMCCA area. The budget also announced additional funding for next year for bus service improvements and although we do not yet know how much this will be, I am committed to using it to support continued growth in bus use across the region. In the coming months, EMCCA will be preparing a new Bus Service Improvement Plan which will build on all the best practice from our four authorities plans to date. We will also drive closer collaboration with our local bus operators under one Enhanced Partnership to give a more focused commitment to delivering improvements. This includes improving public transport connectivity where there are gaps in the provision of services. Where funding allows, I will look to introduce further targeted incentives to travel by bus, just as I have done for our students living in High Peak who, since September, can now travel free to college.

Q2 from John Mchugh

Will the governing body of the Authority ever be elected and will the citizens of the existing County's have a vote on whether another County joins the EMCCA.

Mayor Claire's response:

Thank you for your question.

There are two parts to your question, the first refers to the elected status of the membership of the governing body of the East Midlands Combined County Authority.

The governing body of EMCCA, using the wording in your question, is the Combined County Authority Board. There are two types of functions at EMCCA, these are Combined County Authority functions, functions that are the responsibility of our Board, and Mayoral functions, functions that are the responsibility of the Mayor.

Combined County Authority functions are exercisable by the Board either at a Board meeting or through delegated authority provided by the Board. The membership of the Board consists of a majority of elected representatives as follows:

- The Mayor of the Combined County Authority - directly elected by the public through mayoral elections every four years.

- Eight Constituent Council representatives – these are elected councillors from each of the four constituent councils who are elected by the public through each council's election cycle.
- Four Non-Constituent representatives – these are District and Borough Councillors who are elected by the public through their respective council's election cycle and are then subsequently selecting to represent District and Borough Councils on the Combined County Authority by each County/ City areas designated body.
- Up to four Associate representatives – these individuals are not publicly elected politicians, unlike the rest of the membership of the Combined County Authority. An Associate representatives is an individual appointed to be a member of the Combined County Authority in accordance with section 12 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023. These are individuals that the Combined County Authority has identified as having expertise that can benefit the activity and considerations of the Board.

As set out above, the majority of the governing body of the Authority therefore consists of elected representatives.

The second part of your question refers to the process that would need to be followed if another County was to wish to join the East Midlands Combined County Authority and whether the citizens of the existing constituent councils would have a say in that process.

The power to add further constituent councils to EMCCA is contained in section 25 (Changes to boundaries of a CCA's area) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA). The link above will take you to the relevant legislation in full, however I have summarised the process to help provide context in answering your question. The process would be as follows:

- The Secretary of State may, by regulations, change the boundaries of a CCA – i.e. add a new constituent council.
- This can be a Two-tier County, Unitary County or Unitary District
- The council to be added must not be a part of another CCA, combined authority or integrated transport authority.
- The relevant council to be added must consent to being added to the CCA.
- The mayor of the CCA must consent to the addition.

The above power must be exercised by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 48 LURA which says that in order to add a new constituent councils under section 25, the Secretary of State must consider that doing so will:

- improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of some or all of the people who live or work in the area.
- secure effective and convenient local government for the area; and
- will achieve the purposes to be achieved by a proposal submitted but an authority requesting the addition (see next bullet point) – if such a request has been made.

There must also be a public consultation carried out:

- | Across the area of the CCA; and
- | Across the area that is proposed to be added to the CCA.

If a consultation has been carried out as part of a proposal submitted but an authority requesting the addition (see next bullet point), then the Secretary of State can rely on that consultation. If the addition does not follow a proposal, the Secretary of State must instigate the consultation before exercising their power under section 25. In either case, the Secretary of State must have regard to the responses to that consultation before exercising their power under section 25. In addition to the Secretary of State's power under section 25 of LURA to instigate the expansion of the CCA, section 47 of LURA gives the CCA, current constituent councils and authorities that want to join the CAA the ability to make a proposal for the addition of another constituent council. In doing so they must:

- Carry out a public consultation:
 - Across the area of the CCA; and
 - Across the area that is proposed to be added to the CCA and have regard to the responses of that consultation.

As set out above, the citizens of the existing County's would be consulted with on whether another County joins the EMCCA should that situation ever arise.