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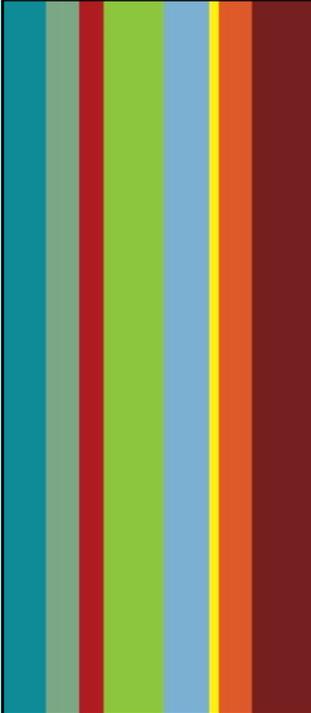


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**The Devolution Agenda,  
Restructures, and Unitarisation**

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## **Will we ever have devolution to local government?**

- A centralised country
- Funding and capping
- The regional issue
- The finances of councils
- Combined authorities, metro mayors
- Unitary authorities
- Other ways of reorganisation

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## **A centralised country**

- Devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Regional attempts and failure in the early 2000s
- The White Paper that wasn't/isn't and will come out "in due course".....
- What is the focus now ?
- Economic Recovery
- Is reorganisation just a helpful/unhelpful distraction?

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## Latest news

- October 13 2020
- Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset invited to submit proposals for the creation of unitary authorities by April 2023
- White paper postponed until 2021
- Issues around Covid and economic recovery
- Is local leadership seen as important by central government ?
- Empowered local government

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## Devolution promises

- First deal- to Greater Manchester Combined Authority in November 2014
- Then- commitment to strong city regions led by elected mayors.....
- Proactive consideration of what can be devolved and facilitate integration between local services
- Difference between rural and urban areas in 2017
- Boris Johnson- July 2019- “give communities a greater say”
- December 2019 – more devolution promised “increased powers and funding.....potential of our regions”

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## Devolution so far

- Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016
- Enabling legislation which allows for flexibility over local deals via secondary legislation
- Enables any public authority function to be conferred on a county or district council
- Provides for streamlined local governance as agreed
- Powers relating to combined authorities
- Provides for elected mayors

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## Deals so far

- Devolution deals agreed with 12 areas- tend to be negotiated in private between central government and local authority leaders and have to be approved by each council
- Devolution deals cover (generally) :
  - Adult education
  - Business support
  - Work programmes
  - Investment funds
  - Planning and land use- spatial plans
  - Police and fire
- And sometimes
  - Housing
  - Health

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## Reorganisation

- Reorganisation is different from devolution
- Does not affect powers but just the way in which the local authority/authorities are organised
- Can be formal or informal
- Creation of a new authority
- Closer working arrangements within existing councils
- Extension of shared services
- Politics?
- Does it save money?

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## Reorganisations so far

- Voluntary is better than forced
- (Lengthy) history of working together usually helps
- Can't be rushed
- What is important?
- Don't underestimate the little matters that matter
- East Suffolk
- Buckinghamshire

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## Being unitary

- Does size matter?
- Where is the split for large counties ?
- Keeping local matters local- especially economic and regeneration matters
- What do the public think?

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## My crystal ball....

- Elected mayors
- Decentralisation
- Regional issues
- Role of parishes
- Local fund raising
- Local economic issues
- Saving and spending money

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## QUESTIONS?

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