



THE STATE OF NATIONAL URBAN POLICY IN UNITED KINGDOM

Name of national urban policy	<i>Cities and Local Government Devolution Act (City Deals)</i>
Date of national urban policy	2016
Explicit or partial	Partial
Legal status (e.g. act of the legislature, executive order, administrative guidance, etc.)	Act of Parliament and administrative guidance
Previous/secondary policies	<i>City Deals (2011-2015); Urban Living Action Plan (2014-2015)</i>
Stage of development	Monitoring and evaluation
How developed (e.g. through a participatory/stakeholder process, or act of parliament, etc.)	City deals are negotiated between the Department of Communities and Local Government, participating national government departments and recipient cities
Implementing body	Department of Communities and Local Government
Government system	Unitary, with devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
Type of national urban agency	There is no national urban agency. Two central government departments (the Department for Communities and Local Government; and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) have general overall responsibility for cities policy
Implementation mechanism (e.g. committee, involvement of multiple agencies, national-local co-ordination)	Involvement of multiple national government departments/agencies, including national-local co-ordination

Current national urban policy

The United Kingdom does not have an explicit national urban policy, but since 2011, it has been actively engaged in decentralising urban policy through its *City Deals* for English cities and for some cities in the devolved administrations. The 2016 *Cities and Local Government Devolution Act* provided a more explicit legislative framework for the *City Deals*.

The *City Deals* allow a degree of “tailored” devolution of responsibility to English cities. They require better horizontal (across departments) and vertical (between the centre and the cities) co-ordination, and strengthened local capacity. These agreements between national and local governments give cities control to:

1. take responsibility for decisions that affect their area;
2. design their own strategies to help businesses grow;
3. create economic growth; and
4. decide how public money should be spent.

The *City Deals* are focused on institutional alignments and re-centring local governments as key agents of urban planning (Dodson et al., 2015).

The first wave of *City Deals* in 2011-12, involved the eight largest English cities outside of London, known as the “core cities”. A second subsequent wave involved 20 cities – the next 14 largest cities outside of London and their wider areas plus the 6 cities with the highest population growth during 2001 to 2010. With the help of the Cities and Local Growth Unit – a partnership between the Department of Communities and Local Government and the

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, these cities have negotiated deals with the national government that have given each city new powers in exchange for greater responsibility to stimulate and support economic growth in their area. A new round of Devolution Deals began after the May 2015 election. A total of 38 proposed devolution deals were put forward by cities, towns and counties across the United Kingdom by the September 2015 deadline, covering urban as well as rural areas (OECD, 2015). Eight of these were enacted between October 2015 and May 2016 (Government of the United Kingdom, 2016a).

In February 2016, Parliament enacted the *Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016*. The Act was intended to provide a national legal framework to simplify the process of devolving more powers to local governments and provides support for the 2016-17 round of City Deals proposed in 2015. The Act grants greater powers to some cities and creates the framework for electing a city-wide metro mayor (United Kingdom Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015; Government of the United Kingdom, 2016b). Within the devolved administrations, the United Kingdom and devolved administration governments are jointly investing in City Deals which so far have included striking deals with Aberdeen, Cardiff Capital Region, Glasgow and Clyde Valley, and Inverness and the Highlands, with Tayside and Stirling to follow (House of Commons Library, 2016a).

Areas covered by current urban policy

Sector	Sectoral representation in the <i>City Deals</i>
Economic development	Extensive
Spatial structure	Low
Human development	Moderate
Environmental sustainability	Low
Climate resilience	Low

Specific issues covered by current national urban policy

The UK's *City Deals* (based on the 2016 *Cities and Local Government Devolution Act*) include the following characteristics:

Criteria for national urban policies	Appears in the policy
Responds to population dynamics	X
Promotes a territorial approach (in particular urban-rural linkages)	X
Addresses the urban systems (from large to medium and small cities) and the connectivity among cities	X
Prepares for infrastructure and services in cities (including public space)	X
Promotes urban land-use efficiency	
Enhances environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change	
Develops effective urban governance systems (horizontal co-ordination and vertical alignment)	X
Promotes effective municipal finance systems	X
Supports partnership and co-operation between urban actors	X
Safeguards inclusiveness and participation in the process and outcomes (inequity, segregation, safety, etc.)	X
Ensures robust and comparable urban scale data	

Bibliography

- Government of the United Kingdom (2016a), “City Deals and Growth Deals”, updated 26 May 2016, Government of the United Kingdom website, London, www.gov.uk/government/policies/city-deals-and-growth-deals?page=1 (accessed 21 June 2016).
- Government of the United Kingdom (2016b), *Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016*, 28 January 2016, Act of Parliament, Government of the United Kingdom, London, www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/1/contents/enacted/data.htm (accessed 21 June 2016).
- House of Commons Library (2016a), “City Deals”, *Briefing Paper*, No. 7158 (2016), 24 August 2016, <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07158/SN07158.pdf>.
- House of Commons Library (2016b), “Devolution to local government in England”, *Briefing Paper*, No. 07029, 19 July 2016, <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN07029/SN07029.pdf>.
- OECD (2015), “Regional Outlook Survey Results: United Kingdom”, unpublished.
- UN Habitat (2017, forthcoming). *A Consolidated Report of Regional National Urban Policy Reviews (Africa, Arab States, Asia and Pacific Europe and North America, Latin America and the Caribbean)*, Nairobi: UN Habitat.
- United Kingdom Department for Communities and Local Government (2015), “Landmark devolution bids submitted from right across the country”, Policy webpage, 11 September 2015, Department for Communities and Local Government, London, www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-devolution-bids-submitted-from-right-across-the-country (accessed 21 June 2016).