

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY ACT 1999

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND

Functions of the GLA

Transport

20. The Mayor will have a duty to produce an integrated transport strategy for London. This strategy will be prepared within the context of the national integrated transport policy as expressed in the Government White Paper *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone* (Cm 3950) which was published in July 1998. The Act also provides the Mayor and the London borough councils with enabling powers which would allow them to introduce road user charging and a levy on workplace parking in the context of the Mayor's integrated transport strategy.
21. The Act makes provision in connection with public-private partnership agreements for the London Underground, as announced in Parliament by the Deputy Prime Minister on 20 March 1998 (Hansard 308, col 1539).
22. The Act unifies responsibility for transport in London by establishing a single body, Transport for London (TfL), which will replace London Regional Transport (LRT) and take over the functions of other transport bodies. TfL will be directly accountable to the Mayor and will be responsible for implementing his transport strategy.
23. TfL will be chaired by either the Mayor, or a chairman appointed by the Mayor, and will have a wide range of executive responsibilities. The current powers of LRT will be divided between the Mayor and TfL, with certain key powers resting with the Mayor and operational powers resting with TfL.
24. TfL will be responsible for road maintenance and traffic management on the GLA roads, which will comprise the most important London roads. The Mayor and TfL will also have powers to regulate taxis and minicabs and promote river services. The Mayor will have extensive powers of direction over all TfL activities.

Economic Development

25. In relation to the LDA (established by the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998), the Act provides for the Mayor to exercise most of the functions exercisable by the Secretary of State in respect of other regional development agencies. The LDA will be responsible for economic development and regeneration and will promote competitiveness and employment in London.
26. The Mayor will be responsible for London's economic development strategy. It will be prepared by the LDA under the Mayor's guidance, and agreed or amended by the Mayor before publication. The LDA will be responsible for implementing this strategy.

Police

27. The Act establishes a new police authority for London, the MPA, which will be similar in structure and function to other police authorities in England and Wales. The majority of the MPA's membership (12 out of 23 members, one of whom will be the Deputy Mayor) will be drawn from the Assembly members. The others will be magistrates and independent members.
28. The Act amends the boundaries of the metropolitan police district (MPD) so as to bring them into line with the Greater London area (except that the City of London will continue to be policed separately). Those parts of the current MPD which lie in Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey will be policed by the forces of those counties.

Fire and Emergency Planning

29. The Act reconstitutes the existing London Fire and Civil Defence Authority as the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA). The majority of the LFEPA's membership (9 out of 17) will be drawn from the Assembly, and will be appointed by the Mayor. The other 8 will be members of the London borough councils. The LFEPA will be responsible for providing efficient and effective fire brigade and emergency planning services in the capital.

Planning

30. The Mayor will be responsible for producing a spatial development strategy for London. This will be linked to the Mayor's other strategies, and will set out an overall land use strategy for London and consider its economic, environmental and social implications. Borough unitary development plans must be in general conformity with the Mayor's strategy. London borough councils will remain the development control authorities for their areas, but the Mayor will be consulted and, if necessary, will be able to intervene in the decision making process, by directing the London borough councils to refuse planning consent where issues of strategic importance are concerned.

Environment

31. The Mayor will be responsible for assessing and reporting on the state of London's environment. The Mayor will prepare and publish strategies on air quality and waste, and have powers of direction to ensure they are delivered. He or she will inherit some of the Secretary of State's other responsibilities in respect of local authority Waste Recycling Plans and Air Quality Management Plans. The Mayor will prepare an action plan on biodiversity and an ambient noise strategy for London.

Culture

32. The Act gives the Mayor responsibilities in respect of cultural issues in London including powers to make grants and specific duties in respect of tourism. It establishes the Cultural Strategy Group for London. The Cultural Strategy Group will produce a draft culture strategy for the Mayor, who can amend it before publication. The strategy will set out policies with respect to culture in its widest sense. The Act does not restrict the content of the culture strategy by reference to specific topics.