

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY ACT 1999

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND

The Greater London Authority

7. The GLA will consist of a directly elected Mayor and separately elected Assembly, each elected for a term of four years. The GLA will have a general power to do anything which it considers will further any one or more of its principal purposes. Its principal purposes will be to promote economic development and wealth creation in Greater London; promote social development in Greater London; and promote the improvement of the environment in Greater London. In determining whether and how to exercise its power in pursuit of its principal purposes the Authority must have regard to the effect the proposed exercise of the power would have on the health of people in Greater London, and the effect it would have on the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom.
8. The Authority will have specific powers and duties in relation to transport, economic development, planning, police, fire and emergency planning, environment and culture. The GLA will take over responsibilities from some existing pan-London bodies - the London Ecology Committee, the London Research Centre and the London Planning Advisory Committee.

The Mayor of London

9. The GLA will have a directly elected Mayor, known as the Mayor of London.
10. The Mayor will be responsible for developing the GLA's strategies for transport, planning and the environment in London and will have a range of powers to implement them. The Mayor will also approve strategies for economic development and culture. The Mayor will be required to ensure that these strategies take each other into account. The Mayor will be responsible for setting a budget for the GLA and its four functional bodies, and will make a number of appointments to the boards of the four functional bodies and other London organisations.

The London Assembly

11. The Assembly is the forum in which the Mayor's proposals will be examined and the Mayor's decisions and actions will be reviewed.
12. The Assembly must be consulted by the Mayor during the preparation of each of the GLA strategies. The Assembly will consider the budget for the GLA and the four functional bodies, and will be able to overrule either all or part of the Mayor's proposals by a two-thirds majority. The Assembly will scrutinise the exercise of the Mayor's functions and conduct investigations into London issues.

Public Accountability

13. The Mayor and Assembly will be accountable to Londoners. The Mayor will hold an annual, public, State of London debate and every year will attend ten question times to allow Assembly members to enquire into actions and policies. The Mayor and Assembly together will hold a twice yearly public meeting called a "People's Question Time".

Elections to the GLA

14. If there are three or more candidates, the Mayor will be elected under the supplementary vote system which gives voters the opportunity to express a first and second preference in respect of the candidates for election. (If there are fewer than three candidates, the 'first past the post' voting system will be applied.)
15. Assembly members will be elected by the additional member system. There will be twenty-five Assembly members; fourteen will be elected for constituencies and eleven will be elected on a London-wide basis. The fourteen constituencies will be established by order under the Act. The Local Government Commission made recommendations on Assembly constituencies under Part II of the Greater London Authority (Referendum) Act 1998. The recommendations were published on 30 November 1998, following a London-wide consultation exercise. Ministers have announced their intention to accept these recommendations.