

Lancashire Voices: The Devolution Question
Tuesday 9th December 2025

Panel Discussion, 6pm – 8:30pm

Arrival time for verbal briefing – 5:30pm

Health Innovation Campus, Lancaster University, Bailrigg, Lancaster, LA1 4AT

PANEL DISCUSSION SYNOPSIS

Lancashire Devolution Discussions

Politics, School of Global Affairs in the Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences have organised a series of events, of which this is the final one. The first event was a public conversation with a sample of the public across Lancaster District, with a broad range of ages, genders and professional backgrounds in attendance. The second event was targeted at stakeholders to examine how devolution is (re)shaping relationships between central and local government with input from Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council. This final event aims to bring the discussions in the previous events to a wider section of the public.

Event format:

A panel discussion, which will last for 45 minutes. There will be a wine reception afterwards.

Following a welcome from the Chair of the panel Professor Ed Simpson, Ed will introduce the topic, panellists and format. He will then invite each panellist to speak for up to 3 minutes on their background and connection to the topic.

Once each panellist has spoken, the session will open out into a panel discussion with an opening question from Ed to prompt discussion, for around 20 minutes. Ed will then chair a Q&A, inviting questions from the audience. Ed will close the event with some final remarks.

The prompt question will be:

We'd like the panel to consider starting the discussion with a reflection on the opportunities and challenges that Lancashire Devolution brings. (approx. 5 min from each panellist)

Audience

We have approximately 40 people registered to attend the panel discussion, which includes leaders from local and regional government, representatives from social enterprise, third sector organisations, students, staff, local LEPs and BIDs and members of the general public.

Questions submitted in advance from the audience:

- At the sub-national level, CEDAW expects governments to extend national gender equality machineries into local and regional governance structures. While the Convention itself focuses on state-level obligations, its implementation guidance—especially through General Recommendations and UN Women consultations—emphasizes the importance of localized mechanisms to ensure substantive equality. What hope do you see for devolved governments in England meeting their obligations under CEDAW and other human rights treaties that make similar calls?
- How could devolution for Lancashire accelerate the transition to a more sustainable and fair transport system?

Technical information

- Chairs and water will be set out at the base of the lecture theatre where the panel discussion will take place
- You will be equipped with a microphone which will be tested before the lecture starts by our technical team. Roving microphones will be used for the Q&A.

Parking

Health Innovation One can be accessed from Sir John Fisher Drive and there is ample parking.

Visitor parking charges apply at the Health Innovation Campus for visitors until 6pm. Evening visitor parking at Lancaster University will now cost just £1 for up to 3 hours from 6pm onwards. Payment is card-only using the [payment machines](#) or alternatively, download the [RingGo UK](#) app. Visitors are welcome to park in any campus zone.

Read this link for more details on [visitor parking](#).

Your key contacts

Dr Dayo Eseonu, Lecturer in Politics and Policy

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Abi Lucy-Lloyd, Engagement Manager

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SCHEDULE

17:30 The Chair and panellists arrive at the Health Innovation Campus for event briefing.

17:35 Pre-event briefing with Abi Lucy-Lloyd and technical check session for speakers and host; opportunity for panel to meet privately to discuss panel approach

18:00 Event Opens, attendees arrive

18:30 Welcome panellists and guests and introduce the event
(*Professor Ed Simpson*)

Introduce topic, event format and panellists and invite them to introduce themselves and briefly note their interest and experience with the topic:

18:40 Panellist one – Mark Davies, Chief Executive, Lancaster City Council

18:43 Panellist two – Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, Lancashire County Council

18:46 Panellist three – Dr Dayo Eseonu, Lecturer in Politics and Policy, Lancaster University

18:50 Panel discussion, facilitated by Ed Simpson, using the prompt questions above

19:10 Open up to questions from the audience, facilitated by Ed Simpson. Questions to be collected in 3's and fielded to relevant panel members

19:45 Short summary from Ed Simpson to wrap up panel discussion and Q&A and thank panellists

19:55 Closing remarks from Ed Simpson

20:00 Wine reception

20:30 Event closes, guests depart

SPEAKERS

Mark Davies, Chief Executive, Lancaster City Council

Mark began his career in local government with Bolton Metropolitan Council as a building cleaner, where he spent eight years, eventually becoming lead for the service. He moved to Lancaster City Council in 2002 to head the team responsible for services such as cleansing, grounds maintenance, refuse and recycling. Prior to being appointed Chief Executive, he was the city council's Director for Communities and the Environment with responsibility for a portfolio that included public realm, housing, leisure and customer services. Away from work, Mark is a keen cyclist and has previously completed the 170 mile Way of the Roses coast to coast route from Morecambe to Bridlington.

Dr Temidayo Eseonu, Lecturer in Politics and Policy, Lancaster University

Dayo (Temidayo) Eseonu is a lecturer in politics and policy at Lancaster University, UK. She is interested in democratising policymaking as part of participatory governance. Dayo's research is driven by her passion to contribute to the pursuit of racial justice by examining the interaction between lived experiences in policymaking/governance contexts to understand systems which constrain and/or enable racial justice. Her work actively spans the boundaries of academia, community, policymaking and public administration. She is the founding convenor of the Racial Equity in Policy Network, a network for policymakers in the UK interested in addressing racial inequalities. She is also a trustee for Involve and is involved with grassroots organisations such as the Humanity Project, Our House and Lancashire Citizens.

Simon Lawrence, Director of Growth and Regeneration, Lancashire County Council

Simon Lawrence leads strategic growth and regeneration initiatives at Lancashire County Council since 2023. Based in Preston, he oversees property strategy, infrastructure planning, and regeneration programmes, including the development of the corporate landlord model and preparations for local government reorganisation.

Simon is known for his financial stewardship, governance leadership, and commitment to workforce development. He plays a key role in driving operational efficiency, engaging with stakeholders, and shaping the county's economic future through innovation and collaboration.