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Power plan to make cities champions

COUNCILS in Lancashire are to get greater powers to run its own affairs after a government report into the state of Britain's cities backed more regional control.

The report has called for cities like Preston to be allowed more say on how cash is spent taking decision-making powers away from central government.

The minister in charge of boosting the country's cities, David Miliband, has given his backing to the report, paving the way for future city regional government.

The State of the Cities report looks at 56 city areas.

It assesses where they are now and what needs to be done to help them enter the European Champions League of cities, allowing them to compete with the best in the world.

The report, by researchers at Liverpool John Moores University for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, said: English cities are more constrained than their competitors.

In particular, many of the levers for increased competitiveness are not held by city leaders but by national departments. Cities should have greater influence over the allocation and uses of national resources that already come to their areas.

Giving English cities greater capacity could produce greater results.

Mr Miliband said: This is the best opportunity since the 19th century for English cities to put themselves in the Champions League.

A report last year backed the idea of city regional government and called on the Government to give powers to new senates including tax raising powers.