

**Thursday, 13 July 2023**

## **Development of a Northern Pan-Regional Partnership**

<b>Is the paper exempt from the press and public?</b>	No
<b>Reason why exempt:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Purpose of this report:</b>	Discussion
<b>Strategic Priority</b>	Cross Cutting

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### **Director Approving Submission of the Report:**

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### **Recommendations:**

The LEP Board are asked to:

1. Note the Government's intention to establish a formal Northern Pan Regional Partnership (PRP) and the MCA's support for this process
2. Note a set of South Yorkshire governing principles on which engagement on the development of a PRP will be based.
3. Consider key questions relating to the establishment of a Northern PRP, in particular any priority areas for focus at the Northern level – and the existence of other Northern groups that members may be engaged with.
4. Note the work being led by the NP11 to determine future PRP arrangements and the intention of the MCA Executive Team to engage in its development.

### **Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel**

MCA Board

05 June 2023

## **1. Introduction**

**Establishing a formal Pan Regional Partnership**

At the June MCA Board meeting the Mayor and Leaders agreed to engage actively on the establishment of a formal Northern Pan Regional Partnership (PRP) body.

### **Current arrangements**

The North comes together through a range of mechanisms, including the sub-national transport body Transport for the North, the Convention of the North, the NP11 (a grouping of the eleven LEP areas across the North) and through a range of other bodies such as the N8 (a grouping of the eight research intensive Universities) and other forums.

These are principally informal arrangements – often brought together informally through the NP11 and the Convention of the North. These arrangements are broadly considered by stakeholders to have worked well.

The only formal statutory body that exists to develop a pan-Northern position and programme of investment is on major Northern transport issues through Transport for the North (TfN).

Alongside the PRP considerations the Northern Mayors and Council Leaders of the Convention of the North have also been discussing the arrangements in place to develop the Convention of the North process, as they seek to bring together partners and develop and deliver their programme.

## **2. The issue and connection to delivering on our economic objectives:**

### **The latest position on the establishment of a Northern PRP**

The Government, and early engagement with the NP11 and consultees suggest that any new arrangements should:

- Build upon existing administrative arrangements of NP11 as a starting point, strengthening these structures and extending membership to provide a more representative body.
- Primarily be a coordinating body, bringing partners together to address priority areas, which will necessarily include some advisory outputs.
- Be led by evidence (with the regional evidence base function a core element) and the input of partners in establishing priorities. Engagement so far suggests that coordinating work on Trade & Investment and Innovation would present clear added value.
- Ensure TfN have representation on the PRP board opening TfN up to a broader audience focused on general economic development.
- Explore a membership model that balances between local government representatives and non-government members, including TfN, academic representation, non-LEP business representation and potentially the voluntary sector.
- A new body will not itself have a delivery role but should be able to influence activity in the North, working with delivery bodies (including MCAs) to address priority areas.
- The Chair will be an independent person recruited by a transparent process, and with Ministerial approval for any appointment.

It is also clear that the Government will need to ensure appropriate ministerial and senior civil servant engagement in the body to make it as effective as possible, including demonstrating a clearer sense of buy-in from Ministers across Departments.

### **Areas of focus for the Pan Regional Partnership**

The form and function of the PRP is still to be determined. However, it is clear that there are areas of work that naturally lend themselves to a greater Northern focus. These include:

- Building the North's evidence base and research – building upon the work of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review.
- Ensuring transport planning and investment is an enabler of the North's economic potential.
- Building collaboration and clarity on the North's collective innovation capabilities.
- Building collaboration and joint trade and investment promotion; building a more coherent programme of international engagement with the Government.

### **3. What are we doing in South Yorkshire already – and what could we do?**

#### **South Yorkshire's position in relation to Northern networks and partnerships**

South Yorkshire has strong representation in existing Northern arrangements, including being a formal member of Transport for the North, a member of the NP11, and an active contributor from both the Mayor and Council Leaders with the Convention of the North (including hosting the 2019 Convention of the North at Magna, Rotherham).

The MCA play a full part in a range of northern partnerships including the Northern Evidence Network and working groups / bodies working together on trade and investment, culture and place-making, northern life sciences and innovation.

#### **Key principles driving the process to date**

A number of key principles have driven the thinking on the development of Northern Pan Regional Partnership to date.

These are that any new body should be:

- Focused: strategic and evidence-based, rather than operational or political,
- Growth-driven: starting with a shared, ambitious economic vision, reflected in its remit and leadership,
- Collaborative: convening relevant partners driven by a common purpose on behalf of the whole North rather than own place or interests,
- Balanced: partnership of elected leaders, business, academia, and others,
- Diverse: reflecting the strengths of areas right across the North,
- Agile: numbers should be limited so as to support responsive decision making.

In addition, it is proposed that a PRP will:

- Need to demonstrate new structures will provide additional resources and/or influence over national policy,
- Need absolute clarity of purpose to avoid "mission creep",
- Need to be "of the North"/"our voice in Govt" rather than vice versa,
- Be able to build upon the strong appetite for international, investor-facing, activity championing the North/"front door to the North",
- Enable a simplifying of a collection of pan-Northern bodies.

## 4. Discussion points

The LEP are asked to consider:

- The quality and nature of existing South Yorkshire engagement at the Northern level – and whether there are existing forums at the Northern level that members are currently engaged in and could be aligned with a PRP.
- Whether there are particular areas of focus / specificity that South Yorkshire should make a priority in its engagement with other Northern partners.
- How this work should be communicated to a wider stakeholder base in the region.

## 5. Next Steps

The NP11 have commissioned external support to develop the form and the function of a PRP. The support will provide greater capacity to engage with the broad range of stakeholders involved, as well as an independent rigour in developing options that command buy-in from those stakeholders. This work will take place over the Summer of 2023 with a view that there may be the opportunity to formally announce / launch a PRP in Autumn 2023.