⚜ DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Northern Futures

A blueprint for growth in the North of England

Northern Futures Summit Draft Communiqué – 6th November 2014

Northern Futures was launched in July as an open policy making approach to answering the question:

"How do we build on the strengths in the North to create an economic core in the heart of the region that can compete with the biggest cities in the world?"

Since then we have had extensive engagement online, through seminars and roundtables and in meetings. Through this process we have had over 500 hundred specific ideas submitted; ranging from transformational changes to UK democracy to specific pinch points on the road network that are holding back growth.

Emerging from this process there are some common themes that are central to any long-term plan to improve the economic performance of the North. This communiqué looks to summarise these contributions and set out an ambitious blueprint for growth that can be debated at the Northern Futures Summit and that all parties involved in this debate can take forward in the years ahead.

1. **Creating a world class transport network in the North**
   Improving transport in the North was a common theme across all the submissions we received, ranging from specific bottlenecks that need tackling to transformational schemes aimed at radically reducing journey times. Specific ideas include:
   a) Improving rail connectivity, particularly on East-West routes.
      - "Further electrification of trans Pennine rail routes is a crucial first step… The key to success is to ensure that the route is well connected to both east and west and designed to dovetail with HS2." (One North, "A proposition for an interconnected north")
      - "The Alliance takes the view that investment in the rail links between Northern cities and their hinterlands is at least as important as investment in the connections between the cities themselves." (Industrial Communities Alliance)

b) Investment in increasing capacity on the road network
- "Improving the road connections across the Pennines between Sheffield and Manchester is hugely important, whether that is upgrading the existing routes or going the whole way and completing the M67 with a tunnel underneath." (Sheffield City Region roundtable)
- "Dualing the A1 North of Newcastle will surely increase business, especially between Newcastle and Scotland. Getting rid of that bottleneck will speed up logistics for many companies and encourage more into the North East." (Tracy, online contribution)
- "We need the ability to manage the strategic highways network where it impacts on our city region so we can tackle congestion effectively." (West Yorkshire Combined Authority)

c) Improving the experience for commuters
- "Our commuter trains are an embarrassment. If you want to get to one of the smaller towns you get off the fast train from London and get onto some rickety old thing from the 70s" (Young entrepreneur, Manchester Chamber of Commerce roundtable)
- "This should be supported by a "Northern Oyster", an integrated transport payment system across the northern area to allow ease of travel and connectivity across the whole region." (RSA Cities Growth Commission, online contribution)
- "Buses play key role in movement within city regions. Time to give core cities same powers as London" (David Higham, Twitter @oldtrotter)

d) Connecting our Northern ports to the transport network
- "Investing to support port growth is essential – a multi-modal solution to improving port access in Liverpool is an example of the type of investment Government should be looking to progress." (Liverpool City Region LEP)
- "We have a vision of "Connect North", where the dots between Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Hull – with its port facing straight out to Europe – can be connected into a line, and all of the cities joined up with Newcastle, Sheffield and London" (Open Ideas Day, Hull)

e) Capitalise on the opportunities offered by High Speed Rail
- "A new 125 mph trans Pennine route, connected to the HS2 lines and the existing rail network, tunnelled as needed, linking the five city regions together with Manchester Airport and the ports." (One North, "A proposition for an interconnected north")

- "Cheshire East and the LEP are already beginning to draw up plans for ambitious growth around the Crewe Superhub station proposed for HS2, and this has the potential to extend to a wider sub-region." (Cheshire and Warrington Enterprise Partnership)

2. **Harnessing and selling the economic strengths that exist in the region to allow Northern business to compete on the global stage**
   Private sector growth has to be at the heart of any plan to improve the economic fortunes of the North. Many submissions identified specific strengths that could be built upon, whether this was in areas of traditional competitiveness like advanced manufacturing or emerging growth sectors. Specific ideas include:

   a) Invest in our advanced manufacturing base to provide jobs and prosperity.
      - "We need Greater government support for innovation and additive manufacturing: an area of Northern competitive advantage." (Manchester innovation roundtable)
      - "We should invest more in our strengths in advanced manufacturing – such as the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre – to remain at the cutting edge in global manufacturing." (Sheffield City Region round table)

   b) Develop high-tech medical science expertise to rival the "Golden Triangle"
      - "The North led the industrial revolution; it now has the potential to lead the next revolution in health research and data science by creating a northern health science economy" (Dr Hakim Yadi, Chief Executive, Northern Health Science Alliance)
      - "Create economic growth in the North by the innovation of products and services for the rapidly growing emerging global market created by an ageing society" (Mike Morgan, online contribution)
      - "There are real strengths in medical science that can be backed now in the North, for example through locating the precision medicine medical catapult centre in Liverpool." (Liverpool University)

   c) Support the growth of digital tech clusters that exist in Northern cities.
      - "To an international audience, a northern region offering different specialisms but collaboration where required, with a single entry point via UKTI, could be very attractive and benefit all northern tech clusters." (Eddie Copeland, Policy Exchange)
      - "An organisation supporting collaboration across local boundaries and cities in the North is required." (Leeds Tech roundtable)

d) Make the North the creative capital of England.
- "Too often the new cultural happenings in music, art, drama, food etc happen in London. Cultural initiatives should be incentivised to be based / start in the North to develop a cultural hub which will encourage people to move there". (Northern Convert, online contribution)

e) Successfully market the North as an international tourist destination.
- "Tourism is a massive part of the UK's income ...It is vital that the north takes advantage of the tourism market to boost its economy and employment." (Chris Mell, 16-24s Northern Futures competition)

f) Provide a tailored trade and investment offer and better access to finance.
- "[what the North needs] a joined up offer from support organisations including Manufacturing Advisory Service, Growth Accelerator, Technology Strategy Board and UKTI." (North East Chamber of Commerce)
- "Government needs to ensure that a banking and finance presence is retained, it is not feasible to rely on online banking, and that local solutions are supported". (D Longstaff, FSB online contribution)

3. **Pioneering new approaches and technology to enable our towns and cities to be at the cutting edge of smart and sustainable design**
Urban living is changing rapidly as new technology enables us to live and work in different ways and adapt to the challenges we face, whether it is overcrowding or climate change. A significant number of contributors wanted the North to be at the forefront of this change.
Specific ideas include:
a) Pioneer "Smart City" technology in the North of England.
- "The north is the traditional home of mutual societies, places where we get together for our mutual benefit. Creating these new institutions in the region will mean we lead the way in unlocking the potential of data for society and will place us at the forefront of innovation in the age of data." (Alex Craven, online contribution)
- "Smart sensors will…mean local transport can be tailored for how many people need to use it at the time. Traffic lights can automatically change signalling times depending on the number of vehicles in each direction as well as pedestrians. Lights could change to allow emergency vehicles safer access. Signs could direct drivers to car parks with space, control speeds during queues and show diversions. A truly smart city network would be sustainable, reliable and attractive to investors." (J.G. Roacher, on the Northern Futures website)

b) Use expertise across the region to champion low carbon technology.

- "The North has the opportunity to follow the likes of Hamburg/Bilbao and the North West Pacific rim of the US/Canada in creating at scale nothing less than a laboratory for a sustainable future, beginning to talk to the people about the real choices that we face and developing (new) approaches to energy/transport/food/resilience." (Mike Reardon, online contribution)
- "We need to support and encourage community co-operatives to locally source renewable energy. There are proven models that work, in the UK and beyond, but it's daunting to start up a co-op, find experts, and get projects off the ground." (Vivslack, Northern Futures website)
- "We want to combine our strengths to create the world's first ecologically smart megacity. Sheffield has 4 trees per person; 32m trees for its 8 million people and an unparalleled natural environment. We have the potential to become self-sufficient in energy production - creating energy in our surroundings, and storing it in the quality of our homes. We could use local skills in creating that energy to develop IP and products to sell to the world." (Sheffield Open Ideas Day)

c) Deliver housing policy that is tailored to the needs of the North.

- "A community led housing movement could be established across the North which could deliver thousands of community led, owned and designed homes in the coming decade. Building on the established successes of cooperative, cohousing and community land trust models, a dedicated and community owned community development vehicle could help acquire land, draw down funds and empower residents to deliver thousands of beautiful affordable ecological homes." (Geopch, online contribution)
- "Commission architects to design good quality housing for young professionals in and around universities in the North. Alongside housing, the villages could bring together employment and workshop space, and in turn attract cultural and recreational facilities such as shops and restaurants. [P]articular encouragement should be provided to self-employed young professionals working in IT, media, engineering and design." (Edmund O'Sullivan, online contribution)

d) Integrate our cities, towns and rural areas effectively through planning.

- "At present the North has too many communities which struggle through lack of employment, remoteness from dynamic economic activity, and consequent poor public, education and health services. No matter how enthusiastic people are to revive them, some have too many factors acting against them to be viable in the 21st century." (Eric W, online contribution)

- "The rural economy already contributes significantly to the economy of the North of England but by developing and building a network of enterprise hubs as hubs for economic growth we have an opportunity to capitalise upon it and to improve the productivity and growth of our rural businesses." (Cnljscott, online contribution)
- "A governance structure with place as its unit of focus presents a good way of connecting areas that have become separated by a siloed approach to policy-making." (Royal Town Planning Institute, online contribution)

e) Improve the public realm within our urban areas.
- "Revitalise the canals in the north by providing facilities for education and community engagement by allowing communities to set up a center which teaches people to build their own boats, show them how to navigate and use them to activate the canals. The process could kick start regeneration of derelict and brownfield land along the canals, create pocket parks, artist spaces and connect the northern cities revitalizing the historic infrastructure." (Elaine Cresswell, online contribution)
- "Could every city in the north of England have a target of planting a tree for every one of their residents or, as a lesser target, a tree for every child?" (Nick Sandford, online contribution)

4. **Ensuring talent is attracted, developed and retained within the North to provide the high skilled labour force needed to drive growth**
A common message conveyed throughout the process has been the importance of developing and then retaining high skilled people within the region. Ideas ranged from interventions aimed at young children right through to support for retraining for older workers and covered both reforms to systems and targeted incentives.
Specific ideas include:
a) More needs to be done to retain graduates in the region.
- "'Graduates should have a student loan holiday for the period they are resident in the three Northern regions. It would be a powerful signal to individuals that graduates in the North are valued and may lead to companies relocating graduate jobs there to take advantage." (Jon Paul Spencer, online contributor)
- "Relax planning laws to create better work/live models so graduates have somewhere to live in city centres." (Open ideas day, York)

b) Provide better links between successful businesses and young people.
- "Establish Northern Works owned and run by a business/ community/users, as a hub providing training, work experience and jobs opportunities for under 25s.' (Open ideas Day, Leeds)

- "We need 'Entrepreneurial Sea Turtles – returning successful northerners acting as an advocate for the region as well as mentoring and supporting young people through advice and guidance, networking and investment in their bold ideas." (Open Ideas Day, Liverpool)

c) Marketing the quality of life offer to attract talented people to the North.
- "North can offer some of the most amazing cities, beautiful national parks.... And its cheaper; better transport links and 'remoteness' of new tech industries – a great opp to sell the North... the North needs to get better at selling itself - too often nobody talks about what the N[orth] can offer...' (@JRhysFoster, Trustee of the British Youth Council, Twitter)
- "Keep excellent graduates by improving housing, culture, career and branding of northern urban centres"' (Open Ideas Day, Lancaster)

d) Support to schools to help nurture the next generation of talent.
- "Develop a Science, Technology & Advanced Manufacturing curriculum development scholarship to offer those young people with an interest in science subjects an enhanced wrap around curriculum experience." (Cllr Rob Polhill, Leader Halton Borough Council)
- "Invest in 'state of the art' Higher Level Skills, education and innovation facilities to create a 'Silicon Mill', building on core assets to create a strong network of universities to create a strong network of universities, colleges and UTCs which inspire and nurture talent for our advanced industries" (West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership)
- "Establish a business and industry led careers service and network of employers in Manchester across Education, to retain the talent pool in the North." (Kathryn Woolf, Online Contribution)

e) Devolve more power to LAs to develop localised work programmes.
- "Devolved budgets, including DWP funding for welfare to work activities will enable us to target support based on local needs and circumstances." (Mark Stephenson, North East Chamber of Commerce)
- "Flexibility on skills funding to support older people within the workforce and to allow for the provision of bespoke units" (Cllr Paul Watson, Chair, Association of North East Councils)

5. **Transferring power from central government to local leaders to provide the tools needed to deliver this vision**

Underpinning the vast majority of the contributions was a feeling that transforming the economic performance of the North could only be achieved by devolving power and giving those with the ideas the tools to implement them and giving the North greater recognition in national decision making. Specific ideas include:

a) Devolving significant new powers to metropolitan areas.

- "We recommend the creation of an independent City-Region Devolution Committee to evaluate metro applications for devolved status" (RSA City Growth Commission)
- "Devolution must be for better outcomes, not for the sake of it– cities will only ask for devolved control of power or resource where it enables us to deliver local outcomes more efficiently and effectively." (Sheffield City Region)
- "We appreciate the need for discussions on governance and further devolution and are particularly anxious to explore new freedoms and in order to optimise this wave of growth." (Hull and the Humber)

b) Giving the North more control over the tax revenue it raises.

- "The Government needs to make a commitment to truly devolve powers and funds to Combined Authorities including tax raising income so that those areas that are a cost centre for the UK can become a net contributor." (Blackburn with Darwen Council)
- "Tax and spend decisions should be more flexible, equitable and targeted according to local or regional economic conditions: not just those in London." (North East Chamber of Commerce)

c) Ensuring there is strong leadership and accountability across the region.

- "There are compelling reasons why extending combined authorities to places where local authority collaboration over functional economic geographies could bring clear benefit" (IPPR North)
- "Perhaps the greatest part of England's success in the 21st century has been London, a city with a directly elected mayor and the privilege of holding a range of hard and soft powers that are envied outside the capital." (IPPR North)
- "Government should set out a common framework for the accountability needed to support comprehensive devolution to city regions but refrain from prescribing a specific model which would risk appearing centrally imposed." (Sheffield City Region)

d) Strengthening the North's voice within the UK.
- "A Northern Government Office would also help to reduce the sucking of highly skilled personnel from the North to the South." (East Riding of Yorkshire Council)
- "The Northern Council would be a democratic body with people elected from constituencies based on groups of Westminster seats." (James Hancock, online contribution)

e) Consider relocating national institutions to the North.
- "My idea is for or Government to take the radical, bold step to wholly relocate at least one or two major Civil Service Departments - which could particularly include BIS - outside of London and the South East to the major City infrastructures in the North of England." (Justin Homer, online contribution)
- "An example of this working is in the BBC relocation to Salford: the national government effectively 'pushed' chunks of the BBC out of London – and since going to Salford, ITV and other organisations are there too." (Open Ideas Day, Hull)

This is by no means a comprehensive list of the ideas that we have received but does capture the major themes that have emerged. More detail is available on the website – http://northernfutures.dialogue-app.com – and we will make available a consolidated record of all contributions submitted after the Summit.