



**Knowsley Council**

30 September 2013

Rt. Hon. Eric Pickles MP  
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

Dear Secretary of State

**Liverpool City Region Review of Strategic Governance and Scheme for the Establishment of a Combined Authority**

The six Liverpool City Region Councils (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral) and Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority are pleased to submit to you the Review of Strategic Governance that has been conducted in the City Region. This review has been done with the full support of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the private sector. After extensive consultation, the review has concluded that the area's economic conditions would best be improved by the establishment of a Combined Authority to align accountability and governance for strategic economic development, regeneration and transport.

The six Councils in the Liverpool City Region have a strong track record of working together on areas of mutual benefit, dating back before the Liverpool City Region Development Plan, which was agreed in 2007. This economic area is the scale at which most day to day economic interactions take place and where the benefits of connectivity between policy interventions in areas such as transport, housing, key economic sectors and the provision of labour market support are realised. As a result, collaborative working has evolved over the years with some notable successes, including the Liverpool City Region Deal agreed with Government in 2012. However, we feel that the timing is now right to review and strengthen these governance arrangements and to move from informal collaboration around issues to joint strategic decision making in order to improve the economic wellbeing of the constituent authorities as part of a stronger Liverpool City Region economy.

After considering the available options, the attached Review of Strategic Governance found that a Combined Authority would most likely lead to lasting improvements in the economic conditions of the area and in the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, building on and where necessary simplifying the existing City Region governance arrangements. Specifically, this proposal would:

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- Bring together the strategic decision making powers and processes for statutory functions and investment priorities relating to economic development, regeneration, transport and related initiatives of employment and skills and strategic housing across the natural economic area; strengthening accountability for the delivery of targets and meeting established strategic priorities;
- Remove the need for issues to be considered or ratified by numerous bodies and authorities, which is time consuming and inefficient, requiring multiple reports;
- Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the related functions by providing integrated decision-making, the integration of the different policy strands of activity and increased opportunities for co-design and collaboration;
- Enable all constituent partners to accomplish and achieve a bigger impact for the City Region's residents, businesses and the economy as a whole through a more effective and efficient deployment of tightening public sector resources, connecting the City Region's assets to our people and communities;
- Secure long-term effective engagement with business and other sectors, including employment and skills providers and registered housing providers by formalising the existing relationship with the Local Enterprise Partnership and providing a place for the private sector at the 'top table' of decision making; and
- Provide opportunities to align strategic capacity and support services to deliver economies of scale, efficiencies and greater effectiveness.

This Review of Strategic Governance has been considered and endorsed by the six constituent Councils and Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority. In line with the statutory requirements, a governance Scheme has been developed and similarly endorsed. This proposes:

- The establishment of a Combined Authority for the area with a remit around economic development, transport and regeneration;
- The dissolution of the Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority and the transfer of its functions to the proposed Combined Authority;
- The transfer of strategic transport powers from Halton Council to the Combined Authority; and
- A robust approach to scrutiny as set out in the accompanying note.

We have long recognised the national and international currency of the Liverpool City Region 'attack brand' for us as we work with businesses and Governments in promoting economic growth and jobs. The world has heard of Liverpool and we see the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership working together to fundamentally reinvigorate the economic conditions of this area and capitalise on the significant opportunities for growth in the City Region which are of national economic importance: for these reasons, we propose that that the organisation formed as a result of the Review is called the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

These proposals were subject to extensive consultation. In addition to the full support of each of the constituent Councils and Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority, we

received an overwhelmingly positive response from the 179 stakeholders who provided written comments. This includes feedback from the Local Enterprise Partnership, businesses, neighbouring Local Authorities, members of the public and strategic partners. We understand that you will conduct a statutory consultation as part of the next phase and would hope that the Report of Consultation being submitted with this letter gives you a strong insight into the views of key stakeholders ahead of that.

The Review of Strategic Governance and Scheme are published on the following website: [www.knowsley.gov.uk/governancereview](http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/governancereview). Should your officials have any detailed comments on the documents enclosed, can they please contact Sheena Ramsey, Chief Executive of Knowsley Council, at [sheena.ramsey@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:sheena.ramsey@knowsley.gov.uk) or 0151 443 3772.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Rob Polhill  
Leader, Halton Council



Cllr Ron Round, JP  
Leader, Metropolitan  
Borough of Knowsley



Joe Anderson, OBE  
Mayor  
Liverpool City Council



Cllr Peter Dowd  
Leader, Metropolitan  
Borough of Sefton



Cllr Barrie Grunewald  
Leader, Metropolitan  
Borough of St Helens



Cllr Phil Davies  
Leader, Metropolitan  
Borough of Wirral



Cllr Liam Robinson  
Chair, Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority

CC:  
Rt. Hon Greg Clark MP

Enc.  
Review of Strategic Governance Arrangements and Scheme for the Establishment of  
a Combined Authority  
Report of Consultation  
Scrutiny Arrangements  
Letter of Support from Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership