

YORKSHIRE DEVOLUTION MOVEMENT

UNLEASHING YORKSHIRE'S POTENTIAL THROUGH DEVOLUTION

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Bids for Devolution in Yorkshire

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Executive Summary

We fully support the ambition of the Government to create a 'Northern Powerhouse' and acknowledge its intention to achieve this by devolving powers to authorities adopting an elected mayor. Our particular interest is how such devolution will be implemented in Yorkshire and that is the basis on which we submit this input.

Of the 38 bids submitted by local authorities, 10 involve parts of the traditional county of Yorkshire. There have also been proposals made by MPs such as that by Greg Mulholland who proposed a mayor for the whole of the traditional county. It is our view that Yorkshire being involved in so many bids and proposals is a consequence of administrative boundary changes imposed by governments since the 1970s that have taken no account of the unique heritage of Yorkshire or of the strong identity of the Yorkshire people. We believe that had they done so, administrative Yorkshire and traditional Yorkshire would share the same boundary and much fewer bids, or only one bid for devolution to the whole county, would have been submitted.

In deciding the geography of devolution in Yorkshire, the Treasury should consider the following points:

- Granting devolution to an integral Yorkshire will respect the heritage of Yorkshire, recognise the Yorkshire identity and satisfy the need to belong (to Yorkshire). This will motivate the Yorkshire people to achieve for their county and therefore for the 'Northern Powerhouse' and the whole UK. Devolving to false regions and fragmenting Yorkshire will fail to capitalize on that motivation and actually demotivate people by being seen as a threat to their heritage, identity and need to belong. The undoubted success of the Grand Depart of the Tour de France last year and the determination to make it happen at all is testament to how Yorkshire is motivated when acting in the name of their county.
- An All-Yorkshire settlement is widely supported amongst conservative Cllrs, MPs and MEPs. Yorkshire-wide/regional devolution is party policy of the Lib Dems, The Greens and Yorkshire First and even Labour MPs, such as Jon Trickett, and Labour Cllrs from outside S Yorks & W Yorks, such as Stephen Brady, leader of Hull, have voiced support for Yorkshire-wide devolution. It is generally only Labour councillors of South Yorks & West Yorks that oppose it! Should the few determine the future of the many?
- Unlike a fragmented Yorkshire, a united Yorkshire would provide ready-made cohesion across the region and therefore be better placed to make Yorkshire and the 'Northern Powerhouse' successful.
- Greater benefit would be gained from the synergy of needing the management structure and assets of only one authority to deliver infrastructure and public service requirements throughout Yorkshire than would be achieved by needing the management structures and assets of several authorities.
- Greater benefit would also be gained by a united Yorkshire because, unlike a fragmented Yorkshire, there would be no need to rely on collaboration agreements with other authorities in Yorkshire to deliver pan-Yorkshire projects. Thereby increasing efficiency, effectiveness and speed of delivery.
- The diverse economy of a united Yorkshire would offer greater protection against adverse market forces than would the economies of individual parts of a fragmented Yorkshire which rely on much fewer market sectors.

We believe that devolution on a Yorkshire-wide basis gives the right balance between decentralisation and functionality so that Yorkshire can prosper as an entity itself whilst making significant contribution to the success of the 'Northern Powerhouse' and the UK in general. We also believe that devolution should be about empowering people and that, in the spirit of devolution, the final decision on how Yorkshire is to be rearranged should rest with the Yorkshire people. We respectfully ask that the aforementioned points receive the serious consideration of The Treasury and that devolution to Yorkshire is prioritised in the following order of preference:

1. Devolution to the whole of the traditional county of Yorkshire, as proposed by Greg Mulholland, MP.
2. Devolution to a combined authority comprising all local authorities within Yorkshire's traditional boundary.
3. Devolution to 'Greater Yorkshire' (all parts of Yorkshire and the Humber except South Yorkshire, North-East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire).
4. Devolution to York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull.

Nigel Sollitt BA(Hons), Chair, Yorkshire Devolution Movement.

29th September 2015

Introduction

We submit this input in full support of the ambition of the Government to create a 'Northern Powerhouse' through devolution.

The Chancellor has made clear that meaningful powers will only be devolved on the basis that the area to enjoy them is represented by an elected mayor responsible for those powers. We therefore accept that, in this submission, our input to the deliberations of the Treasury regarding devolution in Yorkshire should be restricted to those models an elected mayor would head and that our thoughts on the greater transparency, accountability, representation and democracy afforded by our preferred option of a Directly Elected Parliament for the whole of the traditional county of Yorkshire be reserved for another occasion.

There have been thirty-eight devolution bids submitted by local authorities for the deadline of 4th September 2015. More than a quarter of these involve parts of the traditional county of Yorkshire. They are:

Greater Yorkshire : City of York, East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough, Selby, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds & Wakefield.
York, North Yorkshire and East Riding : City of York, East Riding of Yorkshire, Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough & Selby.
Leeds City Region : City of York, Craven, Harrogate, Selby, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield,
Hull, Yorkshire, Leeds City Region and the Northern Powerhouse : Preference: As 'Greater Yorkshire' bid. Minimum: As 'Leeds City Region' bid but including Hull
Sheffield City Region : Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield, Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, North-East Derbyshire,
Tees Valley : Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Stockton Borough settlements south of Tees, Darlington & Hartlepool
North East : Former Startforth Rural District (administered by County Durham), County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside & Sunderland
Cumbria : Former Sedbergh Rural District (administered by South Lakeland), South Lakeland, Allerdale, Barrow, Carlisle, Copeland & Eden
Greater Manchester : Saddleworth (administered by Oldham), Oldham, Bury, Bolton, Manchester, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford & Wigan
Greater Lincolnshire : Eastoft & Fockerby (administered by North Lincolnshire), Lincolnshire County, North Lincolnshire & North-East Lincolnshire

In addition to these, there have been several proposals made directly to the Government by MPs, perhaps the most notable of which was that of Greg Mulholland, MP for Leeds North-West, who proposed a [Yorkshire-wide mayor](#) for the whole of the traditional county. It is our view that so many bids being submitted involving different parts

of Yorkshire is a direct consequence of the successive alterations made by central and local governments to administrative boundaries since 1974 without reference to the people affected.

Heritage, identity, boundaries & motivation

Yorkshire has existed as a recognisable integral entity since the beginning of the early seventh century (then called 'Deira'). It was renamed 'Jörvikskir' by the Danes who organized it into three administrative territories called 'thridju' which survive today in a traditional capacity as the 'ridings' of Yorkshire. Yorkshire remained independent as the largest part of the Kingdom of Jörvik until the mid-tenth century, then carried on in autonomy with Danish based laws, traditions and language until the 'Harrying of the North' in 1069/70 where an estimated 100,000 Yorkshire folk were wiped out in reprisal for their resistance to rule by William of Normandy. Today's Yorkshire dialect derives from the Old Norse spoken in Yorkshire over a thousand years ago. Since then, Yorkshire has welcomed people from all over the world and still does as Yorkshire currently answers the call to take in refugees from the Syria crisis. This has enriched the heritage of Yorkshire with traditions from many ethnic backgrounds, yet, whatever background, there is one over-riding factor that unites them all, their identity as Yorkshire folk.

For centuries, the administrative boundaries respected the heritage of Yorkshire, the identity of the Yorkshire people and the traditional boundary of their county. Unfortunately, over the last four decades, the Local Government Act 1972, 1990s Local Government Reforms, Government Regions, LEPS, Combined Authorities and City Regions have all been imposed without observing such respect. This has culminated in distributing Yorkshire across three Government Regions* and between twenty-eight Local Authorities**, many grouped into a number of sub-regions (Combined Authorities, City Regions and County Councils), some of which include local authorities in other traditional counties or, in the case of Sheffield City Region, also in a fourth Government Region.

Had changes to administrative boundaries been a matter for the Yorkshire people, such blurring of Yorkshire's traditional boundaries would never have happened and much fewer devolution bids would have been submitted by local leaders because of that. Had the devolution bids themselves been a decision of the Yorkshire people, we are confident that by far the majority would have opted for some form of All-Yorkshire settlement such as our own for a directly elected parliament or such as that proposed by Greg Mulholland, mentioned above. We say this with confidence because we are greatly aware of the strength of attachment Yorkshire folk have with their county and of the unique heritage of Yorkshire that gives rise to their identity.

'Recognition' and 'the need to belong' are well documented by such people as Herzberg in his 'Theory of Motivation' and Maslow in his 'Hierarchy of Needs' as factors that must be satisfied in order to get the most out of people and therefore to maximize their contribution to society, the environment and the economy. The current position where successive boundary changes have imposed so many false regions upon Yorkshire is therefore demotivating and counter-productive in that they not only fail to elicit a sense of belonging and give no recognition of identity but actually threaten the genuine identity and sense of belonging Yorkshire folk do have to their traditional county. This is a matter that should be corrected by unifying Yorkshire as one devolved entity to reap the rewards of motivation, not exacerbated by further fragmenting Yorkshire between yet more false entities and identities.

The forthcoming granting of devolution is an ideal opportunity for this Government to be credited with that correction. It is not a concept alien to the Conservatives; this bout of devolution is a tory initiative and most, if not all conservative MPs, MEPs and Councillors in Yorkshire actively campaign for an All-Yorkshire deal. In fact, when also considering that regional or Yorkshire-wide devolution is party policy of the Liberal Democrats, The Green Party and Yorkshire First, opposition to an All-Yorkshire settlement is almost exclusively found in Labour councillors of South & West Yorkshire, despite the loyalty to Yorkshire of their own constituents! Even Labour MPs such as Jon Trickett and Labour Cllrs from outside South & West Yorkshire, such as Stephen Brady, leader of Hull, have spoken out in favour of an All- Yorkshire deal. Should the few determine the future of the many?

Devolving on the basis of Yorkshire's traditional boundaries and thereby respecting the heritage and identity of the Yorkshire people will provide motivation for them to make Yorkshire work as a devolved entity and to fully

contribute to the success of a 'Northern Powerhouse' and the economy of the UK. The 'Yorkshire Grand Depart' of the Tour de France in 2014 is a classic example of how Yorkshire is motivated by acting in the name of the county as one. First there was the determination for Yorkshire's bid to succeed against stiff competition from elsewhere and in the face of opposition from other quarters, then, there were the streets and roads of Yorkshire lined with people waving Yorkshire flags and the event being so successful, Yorkshire now has her own 'Tour de Yorkshire', estimated to bring in around £50m each year.

*Yorkshire and The Humber, 'The North-East' & 'The North-West'

** City of York, East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough, Selby, Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, Wakefield, Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield, Redcar & Cleveland, Middlesbrough, Stockton Borough (settlements south of Tees), County Durham (former Startforth Rural District), South Lakeland (former Sedbergh Rural District), Ribbles Valley (former Bowland Rural District), Pendle (West Craven), Greater Manchester (Saddleworth) & North Lincolnshire (Eastoft & Fockerby).

Infrastructure, public services, cohesion & synergy

If a 'Northern Powerhouse' is to be successful, adequate trans-northern infrastructure and cohesion must also be achieved. In deciding how to achieve that, the following points should be considered:

- Is such the required cohesion more likely be achieved by a Yorkshire consisting of many separate sub-regions of various types, some with devolution and some without, or is it more likely to be achieved by a single and integral Yorkshire as one devolved county region?
- Transport systems, utilities, education, health, public & emergency services, governance and so forth are all required in order for society to function to an acceptable standard at both intra-community and inter-community levels. They have to be made available to all, irrespective of the geography of devolution. That being so, they may as well be made available in a way that offers the greatest benefit.

Would the greater benefit be achieved by a fragmented Yorkshire where a management structure and set of assets relating to each of those requirements is needed in each of the several parts of Yorkshire or would the greater benefit be achieved by capitalizing on the synergies to be gained from a united Yorkshire where only one management structure and set of assets is needed per requirement?

Regarding Yorkshire-wide infrastructure/service projects: Would the greater benefit be gained by several parts of Yorkshire having to successfully negotiate a collaboration agreement between themselves before a project could get underway, thereby running the risk of no agreement actually being reached or disagreements occurring afterwards, or would the greater benefit be gained by a united Yorkshire where such projects would be completed more efficiently and effectively by not having to reach or rely on such agreements in the first place?

- Yorkshire has a very diverse economy with different communities specialising in different sectors including tourism, the arts, science & technology, agriculture & fisheries, manufacturing, financial & legal services, food, energy and minerals. Any good investor would advise that an investment portfolio should be spread across as diverse a range of sectors as possible so that any drop in any particular market is buoyed by the performance of the portfolio overall. It stands to reason then, that a devolved entity with a diverse economy will be in a much better position to cope with adverse conditions in the market than a devolved entity that specialises in much fewer sectors or only one.

Each part of Yorkshire is dependent on or benefits from the economy of each of the other parts in some way, therefore there has to be a relationship between them. Is it better for that relationship to be one of mutual support to the benefit of all parts of a united Yorkshire or for that relationship to be one of competing neighbours to the detriment of some parts of a fragmented Yorkshire?

Decentralisation and functionality

A balance has to be reached between decentralisation and functionality. If the area granted devolution is too large, the concept of decentralisation will be lost; if it is too small, the ability to achieve objectives efficiently and effectively will be diminished. We believe that devolution on a Yorkshire-wide basis will be appreciated as decentralisation by the Yorkshire people and be a level at which objectives will be achieved efficiently and effectively so that Yorkshire can prosper as an entity itself whilst making significant contribution to the success of the 'Northern Powerhouse' and the UK in general.

We are aware that the Government has said that bids for devolution should be agreed between local authorities, however, it is our view that real devolution is about empowering people, not just their local government. The Yorkshire people should have the final say in how Yorkshire should be rearranged, not have it imposed upon them as has happened in the past with LGA1972 etc. Why should the choice set of how Yorkshire will be devolved be restricted to only those proposals put forward by council leaders and not open to the proposals of anyone that will be affected by them? What justification is there for excluding from the choice set ideas put forward by MPs such as Lib Dem's, Greg Mulholland, Labour's, Jon Trickett or Conservative's, Greg Clarke who have all said that devolution to Yorkshire should be on a united basis?

Request

We respectfully request that the points we have made in this submission receive the serious consideration of The Treasury and that the granting of devolution to Yorkshire is prioritised in the following order of preference, 1 being most preferred:

1. Devolution to the whole of the traditional county of Yorkshire, as proposed by Greg Mulholland, MP.
2. Devolution to a combined authority comprising all local authorities wholly within Yorkshire's traditional boundary.
3. Devolution to 'Greater Yorkshire' (all parts of Yorkshire and the Humber except South Yorkshire, North-East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire).
4. Devolution to York, North Yorkshire and East Riding and Hull.

Nigel Sollitt BA(Hons), Chair, Yorkshire Devolution Movement.

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