

The Case for the North

Northern Government: Devolution to the North of England

"Ring out the old, ring in the new....

Ring out the false, ring in the true."

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

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Key Points

- People want change. They realise the current system is no longer fit for purpose. We need a federal Britain, in which the English regions are given real power.
- We need constitutional reform and 'Home Rule All Round', as Churchill proposed, with devo-max for the regions.
- A Northern Government, covering the six historic counties of the North of England and with the power to raise taxes and make strategic decisions, could be a catalyst for change and renewal.
- Transferring power to Local Enterprise Partnerships or city-regions is not enough. We need a strong, empowered Northern Government to act as an effective counter-weight to London.
- An "English Parliament" would be bad for the North; it would ensure south-east dominance and entrench the north-south divide.
- The creation of a Northern Government must be accompanied by a major reform of local government in the region.
- Local government should be reformed to introduce a system of substantial unitary authorities, which should be subordinate to regional governments. Far from introducing a new 'layer of government,' the introduction of regional government would bring about the abolition of a tier of our existing expensive local government system and the achievement of substantial savings and increased efficiency.
- The introduction of regional government should be part of a major programme of constitutional reform which is long overdue. With power devolved to the regions, the role, responsibilities and structure of Westminster would have to change. The English regions, together with the

other nations of the United Kingdom, should form the basis of a new parliamentary second chamber or a reformed House of Lords.

- Regional governments should be responsible for all decisions on domestic policy, except in those areas reserved to central government, unless these involve inter-regional discussions, which should take place at a national level.
- A Northern Government should have tax-raising powers and the flexibility to be able to use our asset base to finance a programme of investment in our infrastructure. The North has a rich potential tax base and could “pay for itself.”
- The relationship between central government and the regions should change completely. The balance of power should shift decisively in favour of the regions. This would mean that, rather than the current system in which tax is collected centrally, so that central government can then dispense its largesse to the regions, the reverse should happen.
- Tax collection should be wholly devolved to the regions. In the North of England, HMRC should become HMRC(North), a tax collecting body which would maintain its own establishment and be responsible both for raising revenue to cover the cost of regional services and those services reserved to central government or which the regions and nations of the British Isles decide to organise collectively.
- The eleven police forces of the North of England should be merged into a single Police Service of Northern England. On financial, operational, and performance grounds, a reduction of the number of police forces in the North would bring numerous benefits.
- There is a compelling logic to co-locating all the North’s emergency services together and managing their command, control and deployment from a purpose built hub (or hubs). This would generate economies of scale and provide for greater efficiency.
- A Northern Government strategy for health should take a holistic, ‘whole system approach’ with the provision of clinical healthcare services, whether located in the community or a hospital setting, being commissioned alongside, and as part of, a continuum of care with other services that impact on health.
- When clinical input is required it needs to be accessible. There is an opportunity for specialists to deliver care locally in community clinics, co-

located with GPs and other community staff. This would enable easier access to care for many, whilst at the same time providing an educational opportunity for community staff in the management of specialist conditions.

- A new Northern health and care system should be underpinned and informed by a single coherent and comprehensive 'knowledge system'. This might range from a requirement for real-time operational and management reporting, to research and evidence based information or predictions of future need.
- In order to increase the prosperity and success of the North of England, it is essential to improve the health of its population. Centralised policies are insufficiently flexible or integrated to adapt to delivering comprehensive regional reform and address such issues as those affecting regional health inequalities. A Northern Government would not be anchored in the present but could take a very different, and long term, approach to the region's needs and, in so doing, deliver viable and sustainable transformation.
- A first-class education system, offering every young person a good chance and a fair deal, is essential for our region's economy.
- We need to ensure that our schools, colleges and universities are fit for purpose; and that our young people are guaranteed good education and training.
- We need to build a better and more integrated partnership between education and industry. Just as it was new ideas that enabled the North to lead the industrial revolution, so now a Northern Government should focus on creating an environment that encourages innovation and promotes new thinking. This means facilitating a closer partnership with the private sector, supporting research and encouraging investment in education with generous tax incentives.
- We should encourage new methods of teaching and learning, promote innovative thinking and develop the skills of the future at every stage of the education system - from primary schools to universities.
- We need to re-visit the subject of technical and vocational education. We need more technical and vocational schools. We also need to look again at the structure of higher and further education, encouraging abstract and vocational education to develop on parallel lines, with some institutions specialising and becoming 'technical universities', similar to those in Germany, which focus their attention on applied knowledge and the

research and study of disciplines directly related to the needs of the modern economy.

- We should have the power to raise money through the tax system to spend directly on education. A Northern Government should be able to declare its intention to 'hypothecate' tax, should it choose to do so, in order to invest in improvements in education.
- We need a regional banking system; one that supports, invests in and partners with the North of England's businesses. We need banks that are committed to our communities and ready to support innovation and the development of the industries of the future.
- A Northern Government should consider the establishment of a Bank of the North, along the lines of Germany's regional banks, to facilitate economic development.
- We need a better connected North with improved rail links between the North-east and Cumbria as well as Yorkshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside. The idea of a high-speed rail link from the Mersey to the Humber must be more than a pre-election gimmick and be pushed up the agenda so it is delivered within the next 10 years.
- The North's economy needs a well-resourced and truly sustainable transport network which is accountable to the people of the North. It has been poorly served by civil servants in London who know little about the North's needs. Perhaps more than any other sector, transport demonstrates the case for real devolution.
- There should be a 'Rail North' executive accountable to an elected Northern government, driving forward investment in the rail network through electrification and new trains – built in the North of England. It has produced a list of routes across the North which should be re-opened as part of a 10 Year Transport Plan. It wants to see more freight on rail and much better integration between bus and rail. It would encourage more investment in safe cycling and walking routes, working closely with empowered local government.
- Local and regional train services should be run on a not-for-profit basis by a mutual 'Northern Railways' with any surplus re-invested in the North's rail network, not exported abroad as shareholder dividend.
- The North benefits significantly from Britain's membership of the EU and withdrawal would severely damage business in the region.

- EU regional policy has treated the North West of England and the North East as distinct regions but there is a strong case, politically and economically, for regarding them as a single entity. In terms of employment, the two regions together are particularly heavily dependent on membership of the EU.
- Sustainability, protecting the North's unique biodiversity and promoting more sensible, regionally based patterns of food production should be at the heart of a Northern Government's programme.

Introduction

The Failure of Westminster and the Centralisation of England

Scotland's referendum on independence gave the British establishment a nasty jolt. A fortnight before polling day, horrified cabinet ministers and Westminster grandees realised that the 'Yes' campaign north of the border had built up such a head of steam that it was now looking distinctly possible that Scottish voters might actually vote to leave the United Kingdom. The realisation sent the markets into turmoil, caused the pound to plummet in value and left many experts wondering what on earth could now be done to stem the tide.

The crisis in Scotland came about not simply because of the longstanding aspiration of many Scots for Scottish nationhood to be reflected in independence but because of a wider and deeply felt resentment of the Westminster establishment and the arrogant, insensitive way it had ruled Scotland for decades. There was a feeling of contempt for what Westminster had become – self-serving, out of touch and corrupt – and a loathing for the apparent self-indulgence and greed of London and the south-east. There was a growing realisation too that change was possible and power did not have to remain permanently and exclusively in the hands of London.

The mood now in the North of England is similar. Scotland has shown what is possible. The effect of the re-engagement of ordinary people with politics is being felt south of the border. There is a growing conversation about constitutional and political issues. People are asking the same questions. Does it have to be like this? Isn't there a better way? Must London control everything? Couldn't we govern ourselves?

The jinn is out of the bottle. People want change and they are looking for radically different solutions. They know that the Westminster establishment is tired and no longer fit for purpose. They realise the Government's "localism" agenda is a sham and that local government remains as wasteful and inefficient as ever. They want

an end to the failure and humiliation of the past and a new beginning with real constitutional and political reform.

A Northern Government, with the power to make strategic decisions about the things that really matter, can be a catalyst for change and renewal in the North of England.

England is one of the most centralised countries in Europe. Economic and financial power has become firmly concentrated in London and the south-east, whilst many of the North's traditional industries have disappeared. There has been a lack of focus on the development of new alternatives and little serious thinking about the trans-Pennine infrastructure necessary to grow and sustain a competitive, modern economy (the Chancellor's recent announcement about a potential new "HS3" rail line amounted to little more than a sop to the North and an indication of his concern about the likely electoral consequences of a consistent failure to invest). As the North's financial, economic and human resources have been diverted south over the course of several decades, apathy, arrogance and incompetence in Westminster and Whitehall have contributed to a growing north-south divide.

Our political system is in urgent need of reform.

The British people have lost confidence in many of the existing institutions of the state.

The standing of Parliament has never been lower.

In the English provinces, the London establishment and the metropolitan political class are widely despised. So too are other institutions, such as the City, the banks and the media.

People realise that their jobs, the success of their businesses and the course of much of their lives are influenced by the decisions of remote politicians or financiers in London – and, until now, there has been little they could do about it. They know too that the opinions of many of their fellow countrymen and women are shaped by a narrow clique of tycoons who control much of the British media, shaping our access to information with their prejudices.

A sense that the old system is decaying and corrupt has swept across Britain. There is widespread anxiety about what the future may hold in store when the vision of established politicians is so limited and uninspiring. In the recent past, this anxiety has fuelled the growth of extremism and lent support to those who champion narrow nationalism or seek our withdrawal from the European Union.

The political establishment's attempts to deal with this public mood of disenchantment have so far been variously half-hearted, disingenuous and ill-

considered. Constitutional reforms, planned by both the Labour and Coalition governments, have foundered on vested interests and been abandoned in recrimination and farce. So the voting system remains unfair, the House of Lords remains undemocratic and the regions remain unrepresented.

Establishment conservatism and a wider political inertia have frustrated attempts at reform. Now, in the wake of the Scottish referendum, the Government has turned with a new cynicism to the "English question." An equitable settlement for Scotland, along the lines of the pledge which helped to secure a 'no' vote in the referendum, is apparently to be linked to progress towards an English parliament, without reference to either the wishes or aspirations of the English regions. Ministers talk the talk about the regions but do little else. They proclaim their belief in a "localism" agenda and talk of the need to reconnect people with politics. In practice, however, nothing changes. Power remains as firmly in the grip of London and the south-east as ever.

Even those establishment figures, such as Lord Heseltine, who supposedly champion the cause of devolution to the regions, promote bogus transfers of power that leave actual control firmly in the hands of the Whitehall establishment.

Would this situation be improved by an English Parliament? Whilst the notion of English votes for English laws might have some superficial appeal, an English Parliament, whether *de jure* or *de facto*, would inevitably be dominated by London and the south-east and most certainly would not improve the lot of people in the North of England. It would simply exacerbate the structural imbalances of the present system and contribute to a deeper entrenchment of the north-south divide.

What is needed now is a radical, new solution; one that reconnects people with politics by transferring power and control over resources to the North of England and the other English regions, giving them the power that devolution has brought to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is time to make a reality of Winston Churchill's vision for "home rule all round" and devolve real power to the English regions. The lesson of the Scottish referendum is the same one that Churchill taught over a century ago in 1913: we need a federal Britain with power devolved to the English regions based on the old 'heptarchy.'

In England north of the Mersey and the Humber, this means a regional government and a parliament for the six old counties of the North, with the power to raise taxes, allocate resources and make the strategic decisions necessary to create a competitive and successful European region here in the North of England.

Freeing the Regions

The North of England (the six historic counties of Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland) has not been the master of its own destiny for over a thousand years since the Anglo-Saxons and the Norsemen ruled the ancient kingdom of Northumbria and King Erik the Bloodaxe had his capital in York.

Now, the region has a historic opportunity to take control of its destiny. The success of devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has shown what is possible. So too have the enviable achievements of regions in other parts of the European Union, such as Bavaria – once the poorest *Land* in Germany and now the wealthiest. Like Bavaria, the North of England has a strong sense of its own cultural identity, an important factor in its renaissance.

The failure of the British establishment to address the problems of England's regions shows that doing nothing is no longer an option. The possibility of “devo-max” north of the border has placed the issue of a new constitutional settlement and the question of how the English regions are to be governed back on the agenda. An English Parliament, which would be dominated by London and the south-east, would be unpopular and unacceptable in the north.

The Government preaches ‘localism’ as a response to popular discontent in the provinces about centralisation and London’s ever-increasing control. ‘Localism,’ however, is an expensive sham, a mirage designed to offer an apparent devolution of power, whilst ensuring that decisions on the allocation of resources and the determination of priorities remain firmly under the control of Whitehall.

Lord Heseltine, who was asked by the Prime Minister to report on how economic growth in the regions could be boosted, proposed what, on the face of it, appeared to be a transfer of power away from Whitehall. However, his vision largely involved the transfer of responsibilities to local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), which lack democratic accountability, are organised on an insufficiently substantial basis and, on their own, offer the regions no opportunity to create an effective, strategic counter-balance to the dominance of London and the south east.

A major weakness of Heseltine’s scheme is that it obliges LEPs to bid against each other for resources and, therefore, ensures that ultimate decision-making and control remains exactly where it has always been - in the hands of Whitehall.

Enabling England’s cities to have some access to a strictly limited amount of new resources, if they happen to be successful in a competitive tendering process, is all very well. In practice, however, it amounts to little more than a few crumbs from the rich man’s table.

What is needed now is a new system that allows the regions to compete effectively with London and take responsibility for their own future.

London – England’s Only Region

London already has regional government. Greater London is, effectively, England’s only region and it draws enormous strength from this position. It has a Mayor, who acts as the First Minister of an Executive, and he is responsible to an Assembly – the same system of government that exists in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

London’s Mayor, his Executive and the Assembly take decisions, which they believe boost their region’s competitiveness, promoting it in world markets and to international investors. They have the authority and the capacity to take the important, long-term decisions on economic development, infrastructure and education, which they believe are in the best interests of their region.

The competitive advantage that London enjoys as the United Kingdom’s capital city is thus reinforced by its position as England’s only region. This structural imbalance undermines competition and contributes to the stifling of growth outside London and the south east.

‘Home Rule All Round’ and the Need for a North of England Region

When Churchill called for “home rule all round,” he recognised that a transfer of power to the English regions was essential, in order both to act as a counter-weight to London and as a means of creating a new political settlement that would strengthen the United Kingdom. He called for a system of English regional government based on the old Anglo-Saxon ‘heptarchy.’ Churchill’s blueprint for English regional government is exactly what is needed now. In the north, this would mean a single, trans-Pennine region, based on the old Kingdom of Northumbria, stretching from the Humber and the Mersey in the south to the Solway and the Tweed in the north.

Such a region would contain a population of over 15 million people, roughly the same size as Bavaria or North Rhine–Westphalia in Germany. Within its borders would lie some of England’s greatest cities.

With an administration of its own, determined to set about improving its trans-Pennine infrastructure, investing in education and supporting the development of the industries of the future within its borders, it could have a bright future and play an important role in boosting overall UK economic growth too.

Britain needs a counter-weight to London and the south-east. City regions are not enough on their own and neither are combined authorities. Without strong regions, which are empowered to compete, the 'pull' of London is overwhelming and wealth becomes concentrated in one corner of the country at the expense of everywhere else.

Regions, however, do need to be strong enough to stand on their own and compete effectively. That is one of the reasons why power should be devolved to a Northern Government, covering the whole of the North of England, and not merely to an assembly in some smaller administrative area.

Although many people in the North of England feel a powerful emotional attachment to their county, as a unit, it is not big enough to have the necessary 'clout' to achieve real benefits for Northerners. To secure finance for economic development and essential improvements in infrastructure or to compete more effectively for funding in the European Union, we need to be a strong, trans-Pennine region with the combined economic muscle, asset base and population size of Europe's most successful regions. We also need to be able to draw on the substantial opportunities for economies of scale and significant savings which a pan-northern region would create.

We have a strong northern identity and a proud northern history. A North of England region, perhaps reverting to its old historic name of Northumbria, could have a great future and one which offers the prospect of real benefits for its citizens.

Powers and Finance

The introduction of regional government and the creation of a federal Britain could only happen as part of a major programme of constitutional and administrative reform. This should involve a wholesale shake-up of local government and some national institutions, in order to create a more effective, democratic, transparent, responsive and accountable system of government for our people.

Local government should be reformed to introduce a system of substantial unitary authorities, which should be subordinate to regional governments. Far from introducing a new 'layer of government,' the introduction of regional government would bring about the abolition of a tier of our existing expensive local government system and the achievement of substantial savings and increased efficiency. The merger of existing county constabularies into a single North of England Police Service, for example, would result in an enormous saving and a greatly improved service.

The introduction of regional government should also be a catalyst for change to Britain's constitution which is long overdue. With power devolved to the regions, the role, responsibilities and structure of Westminster would have to change. The English regions, together with the other nations of the United Kingdom, should form the basis of a new parliamentary second chamber or a reformed House of Lords.

Regional governments should be responsible for all decisions on domestic policy, except in those areas reserved to central government, unless these involve inter-regional discussions, which should take place at a national level. This is the system which works well in a mature federal state, such as Germany, and there is no reason why it should not work equally well in Britain.

There are a variety of options for financing regional government and they depend on the extent of the power transferred to the regions. We want to achieve 'devomax' for the North of England and no less devolution than that which is offered to Scotland. The North of England has a substantial potential tax base and there is little doubt that, given tax-raising powers, the region could afford to govern itself.

1

Paying for a Northern Government

How would a Northern Government pay for itself and how would it afford the improvements in services and infrastructure which the region needs?

The answer is “quite easily” under a system of ‘devo-max’, in which the North would achieve the maximum possible devolution whilst still remaining a part of the United Kingdom.

Any objective analysis of the assets available to a Northern Government will confirm that the North is a region rich in natural, physical and human resources. Nuclear energy is produced here, minerals are mined and quarried, oil and gas are extracted off our coasts and soon also, perhaps, onshore. Unlike London and the south-east, which regularly suffer from droughts, we are rich in water too. We are an entrepot between north and south and between the Irish Sea and the North Sea with an enormous volume of trade passing along our roads and railways, over our borders and through our ports and airports. We are home to some of the world’s leading companies. Our people are talented and skilled and our businesses are ambitious and hungry for new opportunities.

All this constitutes a rich potential tax base for the region.

The question, therefore, is not how a Northern Government would pay for itself but how it could create a climate of taxation which favours innovation and enterprise.

As Scotland becomes more assertive and successful and as London tries to maintain its economic stranglehold on the rest of Britain, this question will be crucial for the North.

We want a northern economy which encourages businesses to grow and attracts inward investment. We also want a fair economy, with an empowered people at its heart. Future growth is closely linked to investment both in education and training

and in the health of our population. That is why a major priority for a Northern Government should be the region's health service and our schools, colleges and universities. A Northern Government should have the power to raise tax from the North's own resources to cover the costs of investment in the improvement of essential services.

It should also have the flexibility to be able to use our asset base more effectively to finance a programme of investment in our infrastructure. A Northern Government would have considerably more credibility and 'clout' to raise funds on international markets than local authorities or local enterprise partnerships. So, our asset base offers opportunities not just for taxation but also for credit finance too.

Regional government could significantly reducing the overall cost of government to individual and corporate taxpayers. The current system is extraordinarily wasteful and inefficient. Central government has repeatedly allowed procurement in certain areas, particularly in defence and health, to get out of control. The structure of the current system allows enormous overspending, particularly in local government, police and emergency services, simply because it has been established on the wrong basis. Reforming the structure, functions and operating procedures of government in the North of England would enable us to reduce the burden central government currently places on the shoulders of our people and businesses.

There should be major changes to current structures and practice, involving the wholesale reform of a system that is much too centralised, overwhelmingly to the disadvantage of the North.

The regions should be at the heart of a new, federal England and the nature of the relationship between central government and the regions should change completely. The balance of power should shift decisively in favour of the regions. This would mean that, rather than the current system in which tax is collected centrally, so that central government can then dispense its largesse to the regions, the reverse should happen.

Along with other responsibilities, tax collection should be wholly devolved to the regions. In the North of England, HMRC should become HMRC(North), a tax collecting body which would maintain its own establishment and be responsible both for raising revenue to cover the cost of regional services and those services reserved to central government or which the regions and nations of the British Isles decide to organise collectively.

A consequence of this new system would be that central government would become less wasteful, bureaucratic and corrupt. The regions would be sufficiently large and powerful to exert effective control over budgets and the allocation of

resources. Central government would be free to enter an exciting new world in which it could concentrate on using its expertise to improve the services it offers to the regions and to ensure that waste and inefficiency are eliminated from the areas reserved to it, such as defence procurement.

2

Empowering our Northern communities

Just as the introduction of a more devolved, federal system of government in England would inevitably involve a programme of long overdue constitutional change, so the creation of a Northern Government must be accompanied by a major reform of local government in the region.

Local government in Britain has been variously either mishandled or neglected by successive governments for generations. Now, after decades of failure to tackle the root causes of its inherent problems, ill-conceived cuts, the loss of key strategic responsibilities and the growth of a system that encourages wasteful, inefficient and intrusive bureaucracy, it is in urgent need of radical reform. Local government is perhaps the next big political scandal waiting to happen.

Whilst the local government 'establishment' has flourished under successive governments, services have been cut and responsibilities removed. The size of local authority bureaucracy, however, continues to increase. Tiny authorities have large administrative establishments, which duplicate those of their equally tiny neighbours. Britain's tens of thousands of councillors have been allowed to vote themselves huge rises in pay and expenses (to the point that an ordinary councillor in a small borough can easily earn £15,000 pounds a year and a member of a so-called local "cabinet" can earn as much as £25,000). Gone are the days when local government was made up of men and women motivated solely by the selfless service of their communities.

The feeding frenzy, which the system encourages among councillors, exists because all the established political parties allow it; to curtail it would hurt their key 'ground troops' and so it goes on, one of many symbols of a local government structure that fails both local taxpayers and the users of services.

The Coalition's 'localism' agenda offers no solution to the structural problems of the system and the Government has failed either to transfer any real power to local

authorities or to encourage the development of effective democratic structures at a local level. At the same time, ill-considered cuts threaten the very survival of local government. It is perhaps hardly surprising that voting at local elections has reached record lows. A typical turn-out is now around 30%, compared with figures in the region of 70-80% in many European countries. This is a dangerous situation which reflects the widespread cynicism amongst many people towards 'politics'. Part of the problem is that local government has become remote from people, with units which often reflect neither people's local identities nor the pattern of their lives.

It's time to re-consider the role of local democracy and develop a new vision for local government in the North, working positively with a Northern regional government.

Campaign for the North wants to see a re-organisation of local government, with a combination of the empowerment of some smaller local authorities and the merger of other larger ones, both working with a new Northern regional government. We need flexibility and innovation. Smaller local authorities, reflecting people's real identities and sense of community, should combine and share resources with neighbouring authorities. For example, some district councils in Lancashire and Cumbria have no clear identity but they are also not big enough to be properly 'strategic'. Outside the North's metropolitan areas, we would favour the devolution of some functions to smaller units – towns or even parish councils – and the concentration of others in larger, merged authorities based on existing counties authorities. Small councils would be encouraged to co-operate with each other and work in partnership with the new Northern Government. In the metropolitan areas, single combined authorities should become directly elected, with a lower tier of smaller district councils, reflecting good practice in Germany and Scandinavia.

An example would be in economic development: a key issue for the North as a whole, where we need both a strategic pan-Northern approach and also a good understanding of both sub-regional and local needs. A new 'Northern Development Agency', accountable to the Northern parliament, would have local bases and involve the relevant local authorities working with local businesses and colleges. Tourism is a key area offering great potential for the North as a whole, but needs a combination of regional and local promotion, working with transport sectors. 'Lancashire' has a particular appeal as a tourism brand, so too Northumberland, Durham, Pennines etc. In health, there is a need for a pan-Northern strategic approach but also the development of more community-based initiatives and the re-establishment of community health councils at the local level, involving local government.

Many local government professionals recognise the importance of grassroots forms of involvement. Some areas – mostly rural – have parish and town councils which vary in their performance. Some are outstanding, showing innovation and imagination in community engagement, whilst others are dismal talking shops. If councils are to become smaller, in some cases they could merge with existing, active town or parish councils in some locations (e.g. Garstang, Longridge, Clitheroe). There is a need for new ‘neighbourhood councils’ covering smaller areas, in both urban as well as rural areas. These could involve local community groups and businesses and take on some of the work of existing parish councils.

A re-energised local government needs a new type of councillor: someone who isn’t ‘only in it for the money’ but who is part of the communities they represent. And the same goes for representatives to the regional parliament. They should both reflect the diversity of the North, with encouragement given to more young people in particular to play an active role in politics. A Northern government should set up projects which aim to give young people the skills and enthusiasm to play an active part in politics, working with schools and colleges to develop programmes of ‘active citizenship’.

Our aim is to create a new system of local and regional government in the North of England, which is both holistic and inclusive, involving people, businesses and communities in a structure which serves all of us.

3

Policing the North – Arguments for Change

The eleven police forces that comprise the North of England, (i.e. Cleveland, Cumbria, Durham, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Lancashire, Merseyside, Northumbria, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire), have a combined strength of 32,179 fully warranted police officers and employ over 11,000 civilian support staff, which includes 3,565 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's). In terms of personnel and recorded crime, the North outstrips the Metropolitan Police in London by over 2,000 officers and around 80,000 offences each year. It accounts for more than 25% of all police activity in England and Wales and almost exactly 25% of police strength. Disregarding those national security and international functions that are the responsibility of Scotland Yard, the North is by far the busiest and most demanding region in England and Wales.

Since 2005, when Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary published its first seminal report on police organisational structure and the advantages of force amalgamations, there has been growing interest in the whole question of whether or not the present 43 force model is 'fit for purpose' in the twenty-first century. The impact of the financial crisis in 2008, and public sector austerity measures after 2010 added fresh and urgent impetus to the debate, and with reductions of more than 20% in total resource budgets for all police forces, it has been acknowledged by policy-makers and professionals that fundamental review is now long overdue.

Put simply, there is no compelling logic in maintaining a structure in which management on-costs and departments such as recruiting, administration, data-handling, etc., are duplicated eleven times over at enormous cost to the taxpayer. Economies of scale amounting to hundreds of millions of pounds would be easily achievable if a properly planned programme of amalgamation and rationalisation was put into effect. There would, in addition, be significant improvements in operational efficiency as larger and more streamlined forces were able to deploy resources across existing boundaries to deal with organised crime and travelling criminals.

Police professionals such as the Police Superintendents Association of England and Wales (PSAEW), the body which represents senior officers at the cutting edge of operational policing at a neighbourhood level, are committed to fundamental change. Speaking at the organisation's annual conference in Warwickshire on 4th September 2014 the chair of the PSAEW, Chief Superintendent Irene Curtis said,

" It is increasingly obvious that we do not need 43 forces across England and Wales. Some forces are trying to address this by forming strategic alliances which means that they are virtually merging in all but name and senior leadership ranks. Current legislation prevents them from reducing the number of chief constables and deputy chief constables, but this is money that could be better spent on operational policing."

Sadly there is little political consensus on the subject, or enthusiasm within central or local government to drive such a policy through. All the major political parties claim, (without offering supporting evidence), that such a move would destroy '*localism*' or '*reduce the quality of neighbourhood policing*'. Closer analysis however shows this to be a fundamentally flawed thesis when viewed through the prism of modern deployment practices. Local Neighbourhood Policing Teams (LPT's) operate at a Borough or Ward level in order to preserve localism – never at City or County level. For example, Greater Manchester Police has over 100 Ward-based LPT's operating across the eleven metropolitan boroughs in the city. The same is true of the Leeds-Bradford conurbation and elsewhere, in Merseyside and in South Yorkshire (Sheffield and Rotherham). Chief Constables might seek to claim otherwise, but the public have scant interest in police structure beyond their local community; they neither know, nor care, about the identity of the Chief Constable for their county. Such detail is of no consequence to them because the police officers that matter to them on a day-to-day basis are the local constables, sergeants and inspectors in their ward, or town or village. Research has shown that the majority of citizens are unaware of the name of their police force or where the force headquarters are situated. If less than one in a thousand people can name their local MP, it is doubtful whether one in a hundred thousand would know the name of their local Chief Constable.

The model which proves the case for large scale structural units is 'Police Scotland', formed in 2013 by the amalgamation of the eight previous territorial police forces and the Scottish Drugs Enforcement Agency. It has been a resounding success, with local policing actually enhanced by the deployment of officers to units which have co-terminous boundaries with local government areas and burghs. The national force headquarters at Alloa acts as the fountain-head of broad strategy and the provider of resources to local policing units within a framework of intelligence-led tasking and co-ordination. Unlike so many smaller forces in the UK, Police Scotland studiously avoids '*micro-management*', with its much reduced

cadre of senior officers seeing their role in terms of oversight and performance monitoring. In its first full year of operation, Police Scotland achieved management, personnel and resource savings in excess of £110 million.

A unitary police force covering the North of England would bear a striking resemblance to Police Scotland, notwithstanding the fact that it would have twice the manpower and more than three times the level of crime. With large cities in the south of the new force area, (Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield etc., plus Newcastle to the north), and extensive rural and wilderness areas in North Yorkshire, Northumbria and Cumbria, its topography and economy would be similar to north of the border. Savings generated by reductions in senior management at Chief Constable / Deputy Chief Constable alone would exceed £3million in the first year of operation and would continue as a year on year saving thereafter. With large sea-ports on the east and the west of the force area and an advanced motorway and rail network, policing strategies could be dynamic and matched to meet the needs of a developing economy for the North of England, without the requirement to continually look towards the Home Office and London for guidance and assistance. Centres of excellence could and should be developed to meet the specific needs of northern communities. Examples might be the establishment of targeted units to deal with organised violent crime across the Liverpool / Manchester / West Yorkshire conurbations; Community focused activity across Lancashire and West / South Yorkshire to meet the needs of diverse minority communities, and rural crime units for Northumbria and Cumbria which are currently shamefully ignored on the grounds of 'lack of resources'.

However, the fact should not be ignored that movement towards such a logical and efficient arrangement would almost certainly be resisted by the new breed of Police and Crime Commissioners. They have been established on the 43 force model and have a vested interest in seeing it continue, not least because they have built up large and expensive bureaucracies on top of each individual force. Their democratic mandate is virtually non-existent, and it is difficult to see what value they add to policing anywhere in England and Wales, but they have a following wind from the current government and it seems unlikely that the Conservative party would be prepared to abandon them in the short or long term.

Looking beyond policing, there is a compelling logic to co-locating all the emergency services together and managing their command, control and deployment from a purpose built hub (or hubs). Again, this would generate economies of scale and provide for greater efficiency and the ability for managers to properly manage, leading to enhanced quality of service to local people. Experience drawn from attempts to modernise the Fire Service since 1997 amply demonstrates the resistance that could be expected from the Fire Brigades Union and other employee bodies, but an imaginative change strategy, coupled with new

working conditions, (and perhaps 'new money' released from savings elsewhere), might ease the process.

The argument for a unitary policing structure for the North of England is so strong that it is difficult to see what evidence could be marshalled against the concept by bodies or individuals resistant to change. On financial, operational, and performance grounds, a reduction of the number of police forces in the North from eleven to one would bring numerous benefits, but most of all it would improve the quality of service that residents, visitors and businesses in the North have a right to expect.

4

A Healthy North

A successful nation is a healthy nation and good health is essential for stability and security.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'.

When asked to consider matters of health, many people might initially think of GPs, hospitals or specific medical conditions. However, the "mental and social wellbeing" to which the WHO refers is significantly impacted by factors including housing, environment, social isolation and inclusion, education, occupation and employment. Optimising health for the population demands a holistic approach embracing all these determining factors.

Enabling a whole system approach to health could generate a synergy within the population whereby the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, contributing significantly to economic wellbeing.

In 1942 Beveridge proposed the system of the 'welfare state' providing protection for people from 'cradle to grave,' including the provision of a 'national health service'. More than seventy years later society continues to do battle with his five evils of 'want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness'. However, they are battles of different degrees in different parts of England.

For example, the impact of de-industrialisation has particularly affected towns, cities and communities in the north and, with substantial loss of employment, the life-blood is sucked from these communities; with little economic investment and little in the way of replacement employment there arise higher levels of poverty, deteriorating environments, poor housing and consequent poor health. Parts of

the working population migrate in search of work elsewhere leaving a higher proportion of older people living in those areas.

Average life expectancy is four years shorter for men living in the north of the country compared with men in the south but this figure conceals more significant inequalities with more than thirteen years difference between the most and least deprived parts of some electoral wards.

In 1948, when the NHS was established, the focus was on short-term illness and disease - saving lives that would previously have been lost and helping people to return to work when they would previously have lost their livelihood due to illness.

It could not have been foreseen that, by the end of the century, with the success of delivering upon the NHS' initial ambitions, coupled with advances in medical science and technology, the majority of people would live to be well past 'retirement age' but often with multiple long-term conditions. Today, 70% of the healthcare budget is consumed in treating long-term conditions such as diabetes, chronic obstructive airways disease and heart disease.

Since 1948 the NHS has grown to become one of the largest employers in the world with a staff of around 1.5 million. However, it is not a single organisation - other than as a political construct. In the past two decades it has been disturbed by five significant reconfigurations although, critically, the implementation of each change has barely reverberated through the system before a different direction of travel has been plotted.

Recent policies and initiatives have focused on the 'marketisation' of English healthcare. These have included: 'plurality of provision' to introduce the private sector as NHS provider; a national tariff modified by incentives and penalties; a target culture accompanied by the ideological adoption of business management structures and practices, such as performance management, on the assumption it would solve problems; autonomy for traditional healthcare organisations with the Foundation Trust programme and increased regulation and inspection by Monitor and the Care Quality Commission.

Through these and other actions, the business of delivering accessible, safe patient care with good outcomes for the population of England has become highly fragmented and progressively suffocated by an unnecessarily expensive, inefficient and damaging administrative wrapper developed as a mask to persuade the public that politicians are responding to their concerns.

As a result, eyes have been taken off prevention policies and agendas. Lack of coherent attention is evidenced by the perverse difference between the health budget of £105 billion and the budget for social care which has now been reduced

to £15 billion – a ratio of 7:1. The contraction of the social care budget in the last few years has caused local authorities to withdraw support in the home from 250,000 people. They have also withdrawn contracts from the many third sector organisations who have increasingly provided community services for beneficiaries to cover the ‘cracks’ not provided for by statutory services. This withdrawal is adversely affecting people’s independence and ability to cope but, whilst the local authorities recognise these people’s situations are likely to deteriorate and they may suffer unnecessary acute or traumatic events, their default position is the safety net of the NHS. When people fall and break a hip or if health fails otherwise, the local hospital will be there to provide a bed.

As well as an abdication of their duty on the part of the local Authorities, this is a false economy. This unnecessary harm makes people’s situation more complex and requires more resource to resolve. The adage that prevention is better than cure should prevail – providing the right care - social care - in the right setting, a person’s home, is cheaper and provides a better ‘person experience.’ The objective cost of budget cuts may be counted as saved by one statutory body, the Local Authority, whilst significantly increasing those of another, the NHS, but the subjective costs in terms of quality of life and ‘person experience’ of those affected are far greater and arguably more important than the money.

A Northern Government strategy for health could take a whole system approach with the provision of clinical healthcare services, whether located in the community or a hospital setting, being commissioned alongside and as part of a continuum of care with other services that impact on health.

The service would be required and enabled to take a long term view of optimising health from ‘cradle to grave’ for the population.

Health is the largest employer in the North of England with approximately 500,000 staff. It is also the largest trainer of people and has a strong academic foundation with seven university medical schools, as well as other academic institutions, research networks and collaborations with industry and academia. There are, in addition, many community based assets within the public, commercial and third sectors, which also contribute to care. This diverse skill base is highly transferable to industry and commerce and the whole contributes significantly to the fundamental vibrancy of the region.

Collaboration between different parties can deliver many benefits. By way of example, we know from the 2011 census the demographics suggest there will continue to be a year-on-year increase in the number of people over the age of 65 years for the next four decades. It follows that there will be an increase in the numbers of people with long term conditions and also the numbers of frail elderly currently consuming more than two thirds of the health budget.

A Northern Government health board could mitigate this high proportion of health expenditure by risk stratification of affected persons for factors such as social isolation and exclusion, fuel poverty, and impact of health conditions on daily living and, thereafter, implementing community-delivered, multidisciplinary action plans to support and monitor individuals. This would enable clinical intervention at an early stage where conditions deteriorate, prevent unplanned hospital admissions and improve a person's experience and quality of life, as well as being highly cost effective.

When clinical input is required it needs to be accessible. However, in rural areas and for those of low financial means, transport to healthcare providers - both community and specialist - can be unaffordable. In South Lakeland, for example, more than 50% of over 75s are widowed or single and more than a third have no access to public transport. There is an opportunity for specialists to deliver care locally in community clinics, co-located with GPs and other community staff. This would enable easier access to care for many, whilst at the same time providing an educational opportunity for community staff in the management of specialist conditions. Non-alignment of services also causes problems for access and system design should ensure that, for example, clinics are aligned with diagnostic capability to avoid multiple attendances on different occasions for different elements of the same episode of care.

A new Northern health and care system would be underpinned and informed by a single coherent and comprehensive 'knowledge system'. This could be pro-actively interrogated by experts in knowledge and information management to inform the system on all pertinent material. This might range from a requirement for real-time operational and management reporting, to research and evidence based information or predictions of future need. Such a system would enable self-modification, allowing services to evolve according to the multiple drivers of change affecting the system - and so aid the system in delivering the ambition of 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'.

In order to increase the prosperity and success of the North of England, it is essential to improve the health of its population. As regional economies differ, so do the determinants of health. All aspects of healthcare services are inextricably intertwined with the determinants of health. Centralised policies are insufficiently flexible or integrated to adapt to delivering comprehensive regional reform and address such issues as those affecting regional health inequalities. A Northern Government would not be anchored in the present but could take a very different, and long term, approach to the region's needs and, in so doing, deliver viable and sustainable transformation.

5

Education for the North

Devolution would give a Northern Government the opportunity to put support for education at the heart of planning for the future – which is exactly where it should be. A first-class education system, offering every young person a good chance and a fair deal, is essential for our economy.

If we are to build a dynamic, modern economy in the North of England, capable of creating and sustaining the businesses and jobs of the future, we need to ensure that our schools, colleges and universities are fit for purpose; and that our young people are guaranteed good education and training. We need also to maximise the opportunity for building on the strength of our education sector and ensuring that it is empowered to fulfil its potential.

North of the border, devolution has allowed the Scottish Government to prioritise education, ensuring that Scottish students are not expected to pay for their tuition fees. With greater tax-raising powers to fund economic development and a determination to invest in education, the Scottish Government will be able to ensure that Scotland has a competitive advantage. Why shouldn't we in the North of England be free to decide that we attach the same priority to the education of our young people as the Scots do to theirs? Why should we leave such a fundamental decision about our children's lives and the future of our economy to Westminster?

The present system has failed the North of England – perhaps more than anywhere else in the country. Student fees in higher education are unfair and they have dissuaded many deserving candidates from poorer and disadvantaged backgrounds from applying to go to university. Fees, however, are merely the tip of a much larger iceberg, created by Westminster, which has undermined opportunity in education, damaging the North of England's economic prospects in an increasingly competitive international market place.

The repeated refusal of several governments to heed the advice of industry and create more prestigious technical colleges has served neither students nor employers well. The expansion of the university sector without a parallel development of vocational and technical education has led to an erosion of standards in many universities and a failure to provide the backbone of relevant technical competence essential in a competitive, modern economy.

More fundamentally, education in the North has been undermined by short-termism and the lack of either a defined purpose or a strategic plan relevant to the region's long-term needs. The problem has been exacerbated in many institutions by unaccountable management and an absence of any authority at a regional level capable of providing support to ensure that the North stays ahead of international scientific and technical developments relevant to our region.

What is to be done?

First, we need a full assessment of the North's strategic needs and an understanding of the role of education in meeting them. Our needs, challenges and opportunities are not the same as those of London and the south-east. Our economy is very different; so too is the importance of education in it. A new partnership, led by a Northern Government and bringing together the private sector and the leading institutions of higher and further education could be a real spur to innovation and the development of the industries of the future in the region. A Northern Government could also provide the support the North's education sector needs to seize the opportunity to expand and develop new markets.

Second, we need to build a better and more integrated partnership between education and industry. Just as it was new ideas that enabled the North to lead the industrial revolution, so now a Northern Government should focus on creating an environment that encourages innovation and promotes new thinking. This means facilitating a closer partnership with the private sector, supporting research and encouraging investment in education with generous tax incentives.

It also means encouraging new methods of teaching and learning, promoting innovative thinking and the development of the skills of the future at every stage of the education system - from primary schools to universities. A Northern Government could look not only over the border to Scotland for inspiration but also to countries, such as Finland, where industry and academia work closely together, or to the United States, where the private sector is encouraged with generous tax breaks to invest in education and research.

Third, we need to look at the divisions the present system has created and understand how these are likely to undermine our future competitiveness. Student

fees have created a situation in which many poorer students do not apply to study the humanities, preferring instead to choose applied and technical subjects, which offer vocational qualifications and the greater probability of a job. The arts and humanities are, therefore, increasingly the preserve of the white, middle class. This is not only unfair, it also contributes to the further ossification of the system and prevents the type of innovation-friendly higher education we need. A Northern Government could promote innovative thinking in higher education by encouraging greater cross-fertilisation between the humanities and the sciences, perhaps by encouraging students to study minor subjects from a different discipline.

Fourth, we need to re-visit the subject of technical and vocational education. We need more technical and vocational schools. We also need to look again at the structure of higher and further education. The reflective, theoretical approach is not for everyone and it was a mistake to abandon the binary divide and adopt the model that was chosen for the development of universities. What we need to do now is to encourage abstract and vocational education to develop on parallel lines, with some institutions specialising and becoming 'technical universities', similar to those in Germany, which focus their attention on applied knowledge and the research and study of disciplines directly related to the needs of the modern economy.

Fifth, we need to be able, as a region, to decide on the forms of schooling that are most appropriate for our young people and best equip them for the future. A Northern Government should have the power to decide, for example, on issues such as 'free schools', faith-based schools, selection and streaming, the reintroduction of grammar schools and the charitable status of schools in the private sector. We should be able to decide on the powers of governing bodies and the role of parents in the running of our schools. We should be able to decide too how much we want to organise collectively as a region and how much we want to devolve to individual schools.

Sixth and most importantly of all, we should have the power to raise money through the tax system to spend directly on education. A Northern Government should be able to declare its intention to 'hypothecate' tax, should it choose to do so, in order to invest in improvements in education.

Education is crucial to the future of the North of England. It should be up to us to decide how to create and sustain the system we want.

6

Transforming the North's Economy

Building a dynamic, northern economy and a firm base for the businesses and jobs of the future does not simply depend on investing in the new physical infrastructure which the region so urgently needs. It also depends crucially on creating a completely new system, which attracts investment, encourages innovation and helps businesses to grow. A Northern Government can be a catalyst for growth.

Britain's present centralised system is the enemy of growth in the North and England's other regions. It sucks investment, talent and enterprise out of the North and concentrates wealth in London and the south-east. Three factors, in particular, hold the English regions back: the first is a lack of control over our own resources; the second is an inability to influence the tax environment to the advantage of business in our region and the third is the lack of a banking and financial system appropriate to the needs of our businesses and entrepreneurs. In some parts of the North of England, the situation is made even more acute by the dominant role of the public sector in the economy and a failure to use it to boost private sector growth.

The North needs a new approach and a new beginning. We need a strategic plan to turn our trans-Pennine northern region into a successful, competitive European economy. How can we do it? How could a Northern Government help to foster the conditions within which the jobs and businesses of the future will be created?

First, we need a democratically accountable, trans-Pennine, strategic authority capable of the long-term decisions that will lead to sustained growth across the North of England. The limited measures of devolution which the Government has so far introduced, as well as many of those now under consideration since the Scottish referendum, involve little transfer of real power and even less democratic accountability. Whilst the greater involvement of the private sector in strategic

planning is welcome, LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) are not the answer to the North of England's fundamental economic requirements and are unlikely ever to produce more than cosmetic solutions. What is needed is a transfer of real power to a Northern Government.

The North of England needs control over its own resources and, as part of a fundamental shift in Britain towards federalism, a Northern Government should have substantial tax-raising powers. If Scotland is given 'devo-max' and the power to use its own tax base to fund economic development, the North of England should have no less. The whole basis of Britain's tax equation needs to be re-examined, so that the regions are empowered. Rather than central government distributing its crumbs to the North, whenever the fancy takes it, a Northern Government should raise taxes in the North and contribute to the cost of central government and the services it provides.

Furthermore, in reviewing the tax system and its role in a federal Britain, nothing should be 'off limits'. Capital gains tax, corporate taxation, income tax and inheritance tax should all be potential sources of revenue for a regional government, as should the assets within a region, such as its mineral and energy resources. Tax-raising should be the responsibility of the regions, with HMRC devolved to them. A Northern Government could thus be empowered to create the business-friendly environment, which is essential for investment and growth. It could also provide the impetus to move the North away from a low-wage economy and assist employers in the creation of proper apprenticeships and the development of continuing vocational training.

Northern business needs to be able to rely on a supportive banking system too. The banks have contributed in no small measure to the collapse of much of the North's industry and to the ruination of numerous businesses, which in other countries with different systems would have been perfectly viable. The problem has not only been that British banks have been irresponsibly deregulated, entirely profit-oriented and driven by short-termism, it is also that they have been at the heart of Britain's disastrous culture of economic centralism.

What is needed is a regional banking system; one that supports, invests in and partners with the North of England's businesses. We need a banking system that is prepared to take the long view and is not motivated solely by profit or the short-term interests of shareholders. We need banks that are committed to our communities and ready to support innovation and the development of the industries of the future.

Germany's banking system may offer some clues as to what is possible. There the public banks, which account for 40 per cent of the country's banking system, the *Sparkassen* and the *Landesbanken* all have a strong regional focus and work closely

with regional governments which may be shareholders. They have played a major role in ensuring that key sectors of German industry in the regions have been kept alive and provided with the means to modernise and transform themselves. How much of our industry could have been preserved if we had had a similar system? A Northern Government could consider facilitating the creation of a Bank of the North and using this as a source of funding for innovation and enterprise. How much business and how many jobs could we create in the future if our entrepreneurs could rely on supportive banks in our region?

It is time for the fundamental reform that is essential if we are to seize the opportunity for real growth in the future. The North of England has the potential to transform itself into one of Europe's strongest and most successful regions. We need a Northern Government, so that we ourselves have the power to make it happen.

Connecting the North

The North's economy needs a well-resourced transport network which is accountable to the people of the North. It has been poorly served by civil servants in London who know little about the North's needs. Perhaps more than any other sector, transport demonstrates the case for real devolution.

The main InterCity routes run north-south: to London. Links across the Pennines are, in contrast, weak and inadequate. We need a better connected North with much-improved rail links between the North-east and Cumbria as well as Yorkshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside. The idea of a high-speed rail link from the Mersey to the Humber must be more than a pre-election gimmick and be pushed up the agenda so it is delivered within the next 10 years.

The North is served by two regional train operators – Northern and TransPennine Express. The new franchises, starting in 2016, will be let by the London-based Department for Transport, with 'Rail North' – a consortium of 30 local authorities – acting as junior partner. We say that the North should have control over its local and regional rail network, through a 'Rail North' executive which is accountable to an elected Northern government. Instead of having our trains run by a foreign state-owned rail company, we say that our rail services should be run for the benefit of the North by a not for profit enterprise which re-invests any profit into improving rail services here, not in Germany, Holland or France. All three short-listed bidders for the Northern franchise are wholly or partly based abroad. Last year, Northern made a profit of £38.5 million, little of which was re-invested in the North. Instead, its shareholders got a nice windfall of £34 million. Profits at TransPennine Express were even higher; both operations are highly subsidised.

Some of the damage inflicted by Dr Beeching on the North's railways in the 1960s should be reversed. In the North-east, passenger services should be brought back to Ashington, Blyth and Washington. Further south, a new route from York to Hull via Market Weighton would be of great benefit, as would a re-opened Skipton-

Colne Line. In the North-West, towns such as Skelmersdale, Fleetwood and Keswick should be brought back onto the rail network. Scotland is steaming ahead with railway re-openings, such as the Borders Line which once connected Carlisle and Edinburgh. The North has an even better case for new railways.

The North desperately needs new rolling stock, both diesel and electric. The devolved Scottish government has invested in new trains; so has London. The North should not be satisfied with cast-offs from other parts of the UK but get a new generation of high quality trains which are built here in the North. Contrary to what the Government says, there is nothing in EU procurement rules that would prevent this.

A growing, high quality rail network must be at the heart of a sustainable Northern transport network. We need good quality bus services which connect with trains, rather than compete with them. A Northern government should work with more local agencies to ensure that we have a bus network which meets the needs of both urban and also rural communities. A Northern government should invest in facilities for cycling, encouraging greater use of the humble – but healthy and sustainable – bicycle. Investment should be channelled through local authorities to develop networks of safe cycling and walking routes.

The current dependence on private car transport isn't sustainable. Whilst we need good local roads and a recognition that – particularly in rural areas – the car is often the only solution, we want to reduce car dependence through improved bus and rail links, but also encourage car-sharing.

The North needs better infrastructure for freight, and again rail is the key to this. Some disused lines, such as the Woodhead route between Manchester and Sheffield, should be re-opened and a Northern government should give grants to firms wanting to transfer traffic to rail from road.

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The North and Europe

The United Kingdom is uniquely unbalanced in its existing pattern of regional government. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are regarded as distinct nations but have only limited self government. They, and (to some extent) London, each have certain devolved powers and authority but these are markedly different in each case and each one has a very much smaller population than England.

The rest of England is not at present divided formally into regional authorities, apart from the “counties” into which all four nations are divided. Some of these counties are further divided into smaller local authorities, such as district councils, whilst some larger conurbations are constituted as “unitary” authorities. The whole picture is characterised by the very highly centralised level of control exercised by Parliament and the central government based in London, which controls more than 80% of all public income and expenditure, imposing detailed constraints upon local authorities in many areas.

A new pattern of regional government within the UK, in part replacing some smaller local authorities and central government functions, would bring the United Kingdom more into line with the pattern of most other European Member States, such as the Laender in Germany and Austria. The 2007 Lisbon Treaty added to the 1958 Treaty of Rome and the 1993 Maastricht Treaty by amending the constitutional basis of the European Union. It included a new emphasis on the principle of “subsidiarity”: this seeks to define more precisely which areas of policy are appropriately addressed by the European Union and its agencies, which by the national governments of Member States, and which are best left to regional and local governments of various kinds within those Member States.

Within the organisation of the EU, there is a Directorate General on Regional Policy (DGRP). In addition, a Committee of the Regions (COR) was set up in 1994 under the Maastricht Treaty (by Article 263 of the EU Treaty) and its role was widened by

the Lisbon Treaty. It now has 353 members from the 28 Member States and EU legislative processes require consultation with the COR in a wide range of areas: for example, climate change, civil protection and energy. COR also has the power to bring actions before the European Court of Justice where the appropriate mandatory consultations have not occurred or where the principle of subsidiarity has not been given due regard.

The Committee of the Regions has several distinct areas of responsibility: (i) employment, vocational training, economic and social cohesion, social policy and health; (ii) education and culture; (iii) environment, climate change and energy; (iv) transport and trans-European networks; and (v) civil protection and services of general interest. Each of these policy areas involves the disbursement of funds under the EU budget. However, there tend to be different boundaries identified in each policy area for the purpose of defining geographical regions. For example, payments are made to quite specific small districts under the Cohesion Fund, which amounts to some €38 billion to be paid between 2014 and 2020 to disadvantaged areas whose average income falls below 75% of the European average. It is not generally realised in the North West of England that the region receives in total more in EU funding than it pays to the EU budget. Most members of the general public accept assertions made in the press that payments into Europe are vastly greater than receipts.

The Assembly of European Regions (AER) is the largest independent network of regions in Europe. This extends beyond the boundaries of the EU, and it brings together more than 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 interregional organisations. It seeks to promote subsidiarity and multi-level governance, in which political decisions are made as far as possible by members of the populations most closely affected by them, in a democratic and responsive manner.

A Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe, setting out the Charter principles in outline, was adopted by the Committee of the Regions on 3 April 2014, and signatories have been invited from all EU cities and regions to use and promote multilevel governance in all future COR undertakings.

It is widely understood that, whilst the European Union refrained from taking sides in the Scottish referendum, a “yes” vote would have led to a newly independent Scotland applying for admission in its own right as a Member State. This, it was widely predicted, would have resulted in vetoes from those other existing Member States in which a high level of stress exists between their regions and their central governments (such as Spain). On the other hand, there is little doubt that there is momentum within Europe for a greater measure of regional decision-making. This is despite the fact that respect is paid to national history and traditions, as reflected

in the forms taken by regional government. Moreover, a 2012 report to the Directorate General on Regional Policy, *Measuring the Quality of Government and Sub-national Variation*, found wide differences in popular acceptance of the constitutional powers of regional bodies that already exist in the various Member States. Most of the nations which now constitute the EU have experienced dictatorships during the last century, in which democratic rights of the citizen have been disregarded. A commitment to democracy is one of the criteria for membership of the Union; decentralised power, through regional assemblies, is a usually seen as a necessary feature of democratisation.

The UK is, in this as in several other instances, an odd case. The UK is unique in Europe in that it has no written constitution. Between 1994 and 2011, nine regions had officially devolved functions within UK government. Although they no longer fulfil this role, they continue to be used for some administrative purposes. Indeed, they constitute the nine constituencies for the purposes of representation in the European Parliament. Moreover, the same nine regional groupings have been recognised by the EU for some purposes of regional policy, for example towards research and innovation. Regional policy towards research (in the policy area of education and culture) involves mapping out existing levels of R & D. The North West of England and the North East have been treated as distinct regions but (as shown in this study) there is a strong case, politically and economically, for regarding them as a single entity. In terms of employment, the two regions together are particularly heavily dependent on membership of the EU. The Centre for Economics and Business Research estimates that 14% of the jobs in the North West and Yorkshire are supported by close trade links with Europe, a view accepted by the Trades Union Congress.

A particular challenge to the principle of subsidiarity is to define how far the redistribution of funds to poorer regions of each Member State should be a matter for their own national governments and how far it contributes to wider European unity and cooperation for the EU to be able to compare regions across all 28 states and to bring about their convergence to some European norm.

Similar concerns are voiced about employment protection and workers' rights under the Social Chapter. Member States are able to set out their own employment laws, including a minimum wage. However, it was strongly argued by Jacques Delors, eighth President of the European Commission between 1985 and 1994, that such protection needs to be implemented right across all Member States in order to prevent a "race to the bottom". He feared that, without the Social Chapter, employers would only take on workers at minimal costs to themselves, by undermining employment rights. One of the attractions of Europe to socialists and others on the political left has been its resolve to ensure that all workers in the EU enjoy a common level of protection from exploitation – which is just why some

people on the right regard the Social Chapter as excessive intrusion into national sovereignty.

In short, the vision developed over the past seventy years of a united Europe has involved sharing certain cultural and economic goals in common, including the acceptance of parliamentary democracy. This not merely requires that the population should have the power to dismiss governments at all geographical levels by way of periodic contested elections, but it also implies that policy making and enforcement shall reflect multilevel concerns. The idea of a centralised bureaucracy that determines policy for all areas and for all locations is an idea alien to the spirit and practice of the European ideal.

A Sustainable North

The North of England is not a collection of big cities (although some people in central government seem to labour under the impression that is). It is also moors, moss and mountains; fells and dales; marshland, rivers and coasts. It includes market towns, villages, seaside resorts and near-forgotten, run-down former industrial centres. It is a spectacular landscape and an environment which is unique but also uniquely vulnerable.

Our countryside is not only a place of great beauty but also a place where millions of people live and work. Our towns and cities are connected to their surroundings both physically and emotionally, in a way which is perhaps unique in England. People in the North have a strong affinity with the region's natural heritage. Our national parks and the countryside on the doorstep of our major cities are part of the experience of most northern families. Our landscape and our environment are part of our identity.

The present system has done little to ensure that sustainability and the preservation of our natural heritage is a priority for government in the North. In many ways, it has failed the North's environment, agriculture and countryside. Indeed, in the recent past, centralisation has directly contributed to crises, such as Foot and Mouth, which devastated the North's rural economy.

Sustainability, protecting the North's unique biodiversity and promoting more sensible, regionally based patterns of food production should be at the heart of a Northern Government's programme.

How could a regional government help to protect our environment, reduce our impact on it and create a more sustainable economy?

First, we need a proper assessment of the region's natural assets and their value – to ourselves and to our neighbours. Modern environmental economics has begun to take account of the importance of what have been referred to as 'natural services' – the things nature does which have an economic benefit and a significant cost if they are removed or damaged. We need a proper understanding of the value of our unique environment and the role it plays in our lives and our economy. When we have that, we can begin to set realistic targets and shape policy effectively to build truly sustainable growth across the region and improve the quality of life of everyone who lives here.

Second, we need a comprehensive strategy to promote sustainability and a carbon neutral economy across our region. In an era dominated by the threat of irreversible climate change, a regional government could play an important role in reducing emissions, developing renewable energy, facilitating recycling, promoting low carbon transport and encouraging carbon neutral living.

The North has suffered more than almost anywhere else in Britain in the recent past from pollution and over-development. The North West, in particular, has been blighted by ill-considered, badly planned urban development, which has meant that, since the Second World War, an area of countryside the size of Greater Manchester has been lost. At the same time, little has been done to turn our towns and cities "green" and make them function more sustainably. We need a new partnership between town and country, planning more effectively, so that people can live closer to where they work and travel on safe, fast and efficient public transport. We need to reduce pressure on our countryside by investing in our towns and cities.

A Northern Government should lead by example, ensuring that the public sector sets new standards for good practice and sustainability. We want our North to be a beacon for a new environmentally friendly, sustainable economy. A Northern Government should be the spur for improvement and innovation in the way we manage and care for our environment. It should place sustainability at the heart of every government department and every part of the public sector.

One area where a Northern Government could help to promote a more environmentally sustainable economy is in food production and distribution. The North of England has a rich agricultural heritage and the food we eat is part of our culture and our identity. Centralisation, however, has done much to undermine food production and distribution in the North. From the demise of small slaughter houses to the rise of big out-of-town supermarkets, the way in which food is produced and distributed has changed. A Northern Government could encourage the region's food producers, retailers and distributors to develop new opportunities to reconnect consumers with local produce and natural food cycles.

It could encourage the adoption of more sustainable farming practices, support 'grow-your-own' schemes and provide a more effective lobby to secure agreement on boosting fish stocks and securing a future for our fishermen. A determined effort to improve food education in our schools could have both environmental and health benefits and support for a "buy northern" campaign could help local farmers too.

Finally, by setting long-term targets and providing incentives for investment in renewable, safe and carbon neutral energy, a Northern Government could assist the transfer to a genuinely environmentally friendly economy.

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Contributors and Advisers

The Case for the North was commissioned by Campaign for the North and a number of people have helped to produce it as contributors or advisers. They include:

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XI

Campaign for the North
A New Movement for Northern Government

Previous attempts to secure regional government for the North of England have been piecemeal and, therefore, unsuccessful largely because they have failed to address the single most important issue for the North: the need to unify the region and create an authority that can build an effective trans-Pennine infrastructure and address the real needs of the North.

Campaign for the North is a new political movement, which campaigns for a single regional Government for the whole of the north of England.

We believe that we, the people of the North of England, should run our own affairs and take the decisions that affect us and our families.

We share the concern and revulsion of many people throughout the United Kingdom at the corruption of many of our existing institutions. We are shocked at the cynicism and broken promises of established political leaders; and we are immensely disappointed at the continuing failure of attempts at reform. We understand that new solutions are urgently needed.

We consider that, just as other parts of Britain have achieved devolution and the right to self-government within a United Kingdom, so too the North of England should have a regional government and its own parliament.

We reject the idea of a so-called “English Parliament,” an option being promoted in the south, as it would lead to even greater southern dominance and arrogance.

We believe that the North should be united and not divided into separate regions. Building an integrated trans-Pennine infrastructure is essential to our future

economic success and the counties of the North should come together to build a better future.

We do not believe in creating an “extra layer of government”. The introduction of a Northern Government should be accompanied by a complete reform of local government and of services, such as the police, across the North of England.

The current structure of local government is wasteful and inefficient, whilst strategic, regional government is non-existent. Restructuring local government and the provision of services in the North of England would create huge savings and allow a Northern Regional Government to invest in essential infrastructure.

Strong regions mean a stronger, more successful, fairer Britain. We are convinced that a Northern Government would contribute to a much stronger United Kingdom. A strong regional economy would be good for the UK economy.

We want a Northern Regional Government to have tax-raising powers and responsibility for policy areas including economic development, education, health, policing and emergency services.

We support our people, our businesses and our community. We want to create a climate within which people and businesses can thrive and achieve their full potential. There is such a thing as society and our northern communities should be supported and strengthened.

We believe in a social market economy that is both free and fair; one that rewards enterprise but also cares for the vulnerable, cherishes the elderly and promotes opportunity for the young.

A belief in the transforming power of education lies at the heart of our programme. We want the power to invest in education as a key part of our plan for the North of England’s future. Our aim is to ensure that every Northern child has the opportunity to be educated to the level of a first degree or a vocational qualification, without having to worry about how they will pay for their tuition fees.

We want a federal Britain in which the principle of ‘subsidiarity’ permeates every level of administration. We are confident that, as the master of its own destiny, the North of England could quickly become one of the most prosperous and successful regions in Europe.

Our priority is to create the conditions that will allow this to happen. We believe in investing in the North’s future and in the infrastructure that builds on our great heritage to create the industries, jobs and prosperity of tomorrow.

If you would like further information regarding Campaign for the North and our case for Northern Government, please visit our website at

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