
Executive

13 February 2007

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

LEEDS CITY REGION LEADERS' BOARD

Summary

1. The Executive is asked to consider recommending to Council that the City of York Council enter into an Agreement to establish a Joint Committee to be known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board.

Background

- 2.1 The Leeds City Region is the area covered by the five West Yorkshire Districts – Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield; Craven, Harrogate, Selby and York in North Yorkshire; and Barnsley in South Yorkshire. This area has a culturally and ethnically diverse population of nearly 2.8 million of which 1.4 million are economically active; is home to over 70,000 businesses; sits astride nationally strategic east–west and north–south transport corridors; and has a mix of rural and urban environments and areas of outstanding countryside.
- 2.2 The political Leaders of the 11 Partner Councils (which include North Yorkshire County Council, who have strategic responsibility in three of the districts) made a collective commitment some months ago to work together for the benefit of the City Region and to deliver sustainable economic growth and improved competitiveness. (Considered by City of York Council Urgency Committee on 17 July 2006.) To that end a city region concordat was agreed setting out the mission to “work together differently: to develop an internationally recognised city region; to raise our economic performance; to spread prosperity across the whole of our city region, and to promote a better quality of life for all those who live and work here”.
- 2.3 To enable the ambitions of the city region (set out in the Leeds City Region Development Programme (CRDP), which includes a long-term Vision for Transport) to be pursued, formal governance arrangements are required. Accordingly, the city region Leaders agreed on 11 September 2006 to develop a formal structure.
- 2.4 The new governance proposals are set within the context of a number of key principles, namely :

- The city region agenda should focus entirely on furthering the economic competitiveness of the area, and therefore governance proposals should be constructed solely around economic related matters, based on the CRDP and the long-term Vision for Transport;
- Proposals should focus on identifying what needs to be done/can be done better at a city region level and should not seek to duplicate the existing role/responsibilities of constituent authorities; proposals should also be complimentary to the roles of Yorkshire Forward and the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly;
- The new partnership body should be capable of engaging effectively with Government and Regional Bodies on issues such as regional funding allocations;

3. The Agreement

- 3.1 A copy of the Agreement to establish the Joint Committee (known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board) is attached at Annex 1, the details of which have been agreed by City Region Leaders.
- 3.2 The Agreement provides a framework for the Board's operation. Detailed Standing Orders and other documentation dealing with operational matters will be formulated by the Board itself.

Voting Arrangements

- 3.3 The Board will be constituted on a 1 Member, 1 vote arrangement. Decisions will, therefore, be determined by a majority of the representatives present at any meeting.

Local Authority Obligations

- 3.4 Each Partner Authority will appoint their Leader to represent the Authority on the Board. In the event that a Leader cannot attend a meeting of the Board a senior member, such as a Deputy Leader or Executive Member will be allowed to substitute.
- 3.5 Although the Agreement provides for the Board to discharge the function of promoting the improvement of economic well being in the City Region this will not preclude or constrain member authorities from promoting economic well being in their own areas even where this entails the adoption of a position at variance with that of the City Region.

Panels

- 3.6 Whilst the Board will be empowered to appoint and delegate powers to sub-committees and officers, Leaders are of the view that all executive decision-making should be reside with the Board at first instance. Accordingly, it is likely that the Board will appoint theme-based Working Groups (to be referred to as Panels) to oversee specific city region work.

- 3.9 The Panels will be chaired by a member of the Board and will primarily comprise of Board Members/Member representatives, although senior representatives of relevant organisations may be invited to join them. The Panels will be able to establish multi-agency task groups to support them and the Board.

Review

- 3.8 The operation of the Agreement will be reviewed by the Board after twelve months and annually thereafter.

Support Services Authority

- 3.9 Leeds City Council will be the initial support services authority for the Board, continuing the existing City Region support arrangements.
- 3.10 The new arrangements for the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board are proposed to take effect on 1 April 2007. The first meeting of the Board will take place on 2 April 2007.

Consultation

4. All participating Partner Councils have been consulted on the proposed terms of the Agreement and the governance arrangements. All Partner Councils are in agreement with the proposals.

Options

5. The Executive can either recommend to Full Council that City of York Council enter into the Agreement as detailed in this report or may choose not to participate.

Analysis

6. Members are referred to the detail contained in the report to Urgency Committee on the 17 July 2006, which sets out the background to City Regions and the benefits of developing the City Region concept.

Corporate Priorities

7. The proposals detailed in this report assist in strengthening and diversifying York's economy and to improve the employment opportunities for residents by collaborating with Regional and Sub-Regional Partners in providing a complimentary approach to infrastructure provision, including new and improved transport/communication links, to generate new business activity.

8. Implications

- Financial

It is not envisaged that any additional resources would be required in the next financial year 2007/08, as ongoing arrangements can continue to be utilised. The Board will consider the longer-term resource requirements and it has been agreed that any future Council contributions should be in proportion to respective population levels as set out in the Agreement attached at annex 1.

- Legal

The Council has powers under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Part II of the Local Government Act 2000 to participate in a joint committee. These powers are recognised in Article 12 of the Council's Constitution which specifically authorises the establishment of joint committees with one or more local authorities.

The legal implications have been considered and legal officers are satisfied that the Agreement is one which the Council can enter into.

There are no Human Resources, Equalities, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property or Other Implications.

Risk Management

9. There are no specific risks with the proposals contained in this report. The development of the Agreement and the activities of the Board will be kept under review.

Recommendations

10. The Executive are asked to recommend to Full Council that they approved the terms of the Agreement attached.

Reason: To enable the Council to play an active part in the development of the City Region agenda.

Contact Details

Author:

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Democratic and
Legal Services
Chief Executive's Department
Tel No. 01904 551004

Suzan Hemingway
Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Report Approved

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

N/a

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Report to Urgency Committee on 17 July 2006 entitled 'Leeds City Region'

Annexes

Annex 1 - A copy of the Agreement to establish the Joint Committee (known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board)