



West Yorkshire / Regional Governance Arrangements

Historical Context

At the time of the abolition of the West Yorkshire County Council in 1986 the majority of its functions were transferred to the remaining five District Unitary Authorities, Kirklees along with Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield and Calderdale. There was a recognition that there were a number of functions that, due to their regional significance, strategic nature and opportunities for economies of scales, would be best managed on a County wide basis within West Yorkshire.

Therefore, along with other former Metropolitan areas in England, Joint Authorities, with the power to raise money through precepts (rates) were created in the areas of;

- Police
- Fire
- Passenger Transport (Metro)

As well as the formally established bodies set out above, locally, it was agreed that there were other functions that would benefit from being jointly managed across the 5 West Yorkshire Authorities, through an agreement via the creation of Joint Committees. This applied to functions such as Trading Standards, Archives and Archaeology, and a number of grants that were provided at that time by the former West Yorkshire County Council.

These arrangements are well established and still in place and the Council has representation and influence on each Authority/Joint Committee. Appointments are made by the Council in accordance with the arrangements in place at the Councils Annual Meeting.

Transport and the Economy – A Strategic Issue

Subsequent to the establishment of the 5 Districts as unitary Authorities, there has been an increasing recognition that, in the areas of economic development and transport, there were significant benefits that could be realised by collaborative working between the 5 Districts.

On a national level there was also an appreciation of the benefits of collaboration within significant urban conurbations in England, which ultimately led to the powers contained in the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and the Local Transport Act 2008. This led to a West Yorkshire Authority

Statutory Review, leading to the West Yorkshire “City Deal” agreement with Government which had been reached in July 2012.

The City Deal offered devolved powers and creative freedom over funding, provided West Yorkshire could demonstrate the way this would be managed would be fit for purpose. With this aim the Government had invited West Yorkshire Councils to consider whether collaborating more formally in a what would be called a “Combined Authority” might be a better way of improving delivery and/or stimulating local economic growth across the City Region, and exercising greater local control.

As described earlier in this paper, prior to the City Deal, there had been a number of successful examples of joint working and collaboration between West Yorkshire Authorities, both formally with Emergency Services and less formally, through the provision of archives and archaeology and the development of the West Yorkshire Local Plan for Transport (LTP).

The Governance review had concluded that, at the time, West Yorkshire had not been performing to its full potential, particularly nationally and internationally and that, there were opportunities to improve regional performance if the 5 West Yorkshire Councils, together with York, were to work together on economic investment and transport through the vehicle of a Combined Authority.

Governance Arrangements Prior to the Formation of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Prior to the establishment of the Combined Authority there had been 2 decision making bodies that had been responsible for strategic transport, namely the West Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority and the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive. Collectively these 2 Authorities had been known as “Metro”.

Metro was responsible for ensuring an integrated, efficient and economic transport network across the integrated transport area. Powers and functions for passenger transport and highways were however split between Metro and the 5 District Authorities, with each having its own functional responsibilities for transport which had resulted in a challenging landscape for the delivery of services.

In addition to this the 5 West Yorkshire Authorities who were responsible for economic development and regeneration in their own local government areas had established 4 Bodies to work together to improve economic growth across West Yorkshire namely;

- **The Association of West Yorkshire Authorities** – A body which had been established for over 2 decades prior to the establishment of the Combined Authority and comprising of the Leaders and Chief Executives of the 5 District Authorities. Established in response to the challenging economic climate, it had extended its focus to driving local economic development and growth across West Yorkshire.
- **Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** – This came into existence in 2011 and worked closely with the Leeds City Region Leaders Board (see below), to deliver the objectives of the Leeds City Region Plan. It

brought together Local Authority and Business Leaders and one of its main aims was to overcome barriers to private sector growth.

- **Leeds City Region Leaders Board** – The Board, working closely with LEP worked with partners in housing, transport and skills. The Board was responsible for preparing and overseeing the delivery of key policies and strategies for the area. The Board had the power to discharge the promotion and improvement of the economic wellbeing and competitiveness of the area on behalf of its Member Councils.
- **Leeds City Region Partnership** – The Partnership brought together public and private sectors along with partners in Government, Education and the Third Sector who worked to a common vision for local economic prosperity and whose priorities stemmed from the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership Plan.

There was a recognition that, whilst the partnerships described above had been in existence and had matured over a long period of time, they were representative organisations and not statutory bodies and, therefore, had neither functional powers or the ability to hold funding. The functional powers and budgets for strategic transport resting with the West Yorkshire Transport Authority and economic development functions and budgets remaining the responsibility of the 5 West Yorkshire Authorities.

The Formation of the Combined Authority

On 1 April 2014 the West Yorkshire Combined Authority was established following a formal consultation exercise which had been undertaken by Government, including consultation with the 5 West Yorkshire District Local Authorities. The proposal had been formulated following the undertaking of a Governance Review that had considered the effectiveness and efficiency of arrangements in West Yorkshire for Transport, Economic Development and Regeneration. This had concluded there were strong economic links across West Yorkshire but that existing arrangements meant that West Yorkshire was not punching its weight economically and had been losing ground in terms of its performance as measured against the UK average.

The Governance Review had considered 4 options: leaving the existing Governance arrangements across West Yorkshire unchanged, strengthening existing Governance arrangements, establishing an Economic Prosperity Board and creating a Combined Authority.

The review had concluded that bringing together key decision making on appropriate strategic transport and economic functions into a single body, that would be exercised across West Yorkshire, would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the functions and increase economic outputs. This had led to the creation of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

The Combined Authority delivers its responsibilities for transport and growing the economy through the following initiatives:

- **A Single Transport Plan** – The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is developing a single transport plan for West Yorkshire. The core principal of

this plan is to support sustainable economic growth. The plan will be a 20 year vision for developing an integrated transport network that supports the Leeds City Region's Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan for sustained and healthy economic growth. The Single Transport Plan will update the current West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan.

- **The West Yorkshire Transport Fund** – The Fund will comprise £600m of Government funding over 20 years, £183m of other devolved transport funding previously secured from a city deal and local contributions and will underpin growth by improving the City Region roads and railways and connecting people to jobs and goods to markets seamlessly.
- **The Bus Strategy** – The Combined Authority is working on a Bus Strategy that will set out what West Yorkshire wants from a bus system and be a key element of the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy.
- **Growing the Economy via a Strategic Economic Plan**– The Combined Authority works closely with the Leeds City Region Economic Partnership to deliver shared Strategic Economic Plan. The Strategic Economic Plan sets out the joint vision to transform Leeds City Region Economy by unlocking the potential of the City Region and developing an economic powerhouse that would create jobs and prosperity. The Strategic Economic Plan was the base for negotiating the £1billion plus local growth deal agreed with Government in July 2014. The growth deal will be used to accelerate economic growth across the entire City Region by improving local transport links, accelerating housing growth and to regeneration, developing skilled and flexible work force, supporting growing businesses and building a resource efficiency to the region.

Combined Authority Governance

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority has established a number of Committees to discharge its responsibilities on which component Local Authorities have representation on a politically proportional basis, that reflects the balance of political control across West Yorkshire as a whole. For the 2016/17 Municipal Year the following Committees have been established:

- Transport Committee
- West Yorkshire & York Investment Committee
- Governance & Audit Committee
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Kirklees District Consultation Committee

Kirklees has representation on all the above Committees.

The Devolution Deal

Following the publication of the "Country that lives within its means, spending review 2015", published in July 2015, Leaders of West Yorkshire Authorities have been working to secure a Leeds City Region "Devolution Deal" with Government. The Devolution Deal will build on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority existing arrangement. Proposals were put forward by West Yorkshire Leaders, with a schedule of 27 "asks" (or powers) to secure a transformational devolution deal

covering the geography of the Leeds City Region were submitted to Government on 4 September 2015.

The Government required that, in exchange for devolved powers and funding, there would be a need to establish new Governance arrangements for a Mayoral Combined Authority, with a direct elected Mayor, as provided for in the 2016 Cities and Local Government Devolution Act, which would build on the existing West Yorkshire Combined Authority. It is anticipated that the initial electoral geography for a directly elected Mayor, subject to necessary Local Authority consent to enable secondary legislation to establish a Mayoral Combined Authority, would likely be West Yorkshire, but with the opportunity for wider membership overtime. There would be meaningful associate membership arrangements for those areas that form part of the City Region's functional geography.

The deal 'asks' comprise a number of proposals within the following areas:-

- A new deal on funding so that the City Region can generate investment
- A transport system for the 21st Century
- A boost for local housing and regeneration
- Helping businesses to grow
- Creating more and better jobs
- Safeguarding the environment

It is likely that any announcement on the Devolution Deal will be made after the May 2016 Elections, subject to a successful conclusion of negotiations between West Yorkshire and Government.

Multi Council / Regional Scrutiny Arrangements

As part of governance arrangements there are scrutiny arrangements in place for a number of regional bodies with representation drawn from each member authority. The scrutiny is aimed at ensuring that there is a level of accountability for regional decision making. The Combined Authority has an approach most similar to that of local authority Scrutiny, whereas others operate in a more prescriptive way in holding the Authority (via a named individual) to account for producing and delivering on key plans.

The Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee is made up of 18 members from the 5 West Yorkshire Local Authorities and has the power to review decisions and make reports and recommendations in respect of the functions that fall within the remit of the regional body. It can also monitor the response to recommendations it has made.

West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service

The West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue undertakes scrutiny through an Audit Committee made up of 6 members drawn from Bradford, Kirklees and Leeds Local Authorities. The Audit Committee carries out its role principally through the reviewing of financial and audit reports. It has the power to refer issues or raise concerns with the Chief Executive or Director.

West Yorkshire Police & Crime Panel

With the establishment of the Police and Crime Commissioner role a scrutiny arrangement was put in place to hold the Commissioner to account for fulfilling his /her objectives in meeting the needs of all of the communities he /she has been elected to serve. The scrutiny body, known as the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel (PCP) is made up of 12 elected members.

The PCP has the opportunity to ask for the input of constituent local authorities when considering a particular aspect of the Police and Crime Plan. Local Authority Scrutiny is not able to directly hold the Police and Crime Commissioner to account, but can require the attendance of the Authority's members on the Police and Crime Panel to provide an update on the views of the Panel.

Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees are an arm of local authority powers in respect of the scrutiny of consultations on significant changes to the provision of local health services. Where two or more local authorities are affected by changes then they are required to form a joint committee to consider the proposals and make recommendations to the consulting body. In cases where concerns cannot be resolved then JHOSCs have the power to refer concerns to the Secretary of State and request an independent review of the area of concern. Generally JHOSCs involve two adjacent authorities but with increasing provision of specialist services on a regional basis there are both regional and sub regional committees, for example in the case of the recent Cardiac Services Review.

Supporting papers:

Examining the Role of 'Informal Governance' on Devolution to England's Cities

<https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/page-files/PSA%20Informal%20Governance%202016.pdf>

Cards on the Table - Tips and Tricks for Getting in on the Action of Devolution (Centre for Public Scrutiny)

<http://www.cfps.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CfPS-Devolution-Paper-v4-WEB-new.pdf>

Building the Northern Powerhouse (Centre for Cities)

<http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/16-05-31-Building-the-Northern-Powerhouse-Lessons-from-the-Rhine-Ruhr-and-Randstad.pdf>

Cities and Local Growth – Report of the Public Accounts Committee

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmpubacc/296/296.pdf>

English Devolution: Learning Lessons from International Models of Sub-National Governance

http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/7632544/3.2+English+devolution_06-WEB.pdf/24c5a48b-744c-4ba4-8736-2277d9fa6e67