



**Report of the CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Executive Board
Date: 24 January 2007
Subject: LEEDS CITY REGION LEADERS' BOARD AGREEMENT**

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In September 2006 Leaders' of the eleven councils which form the Leeds City Region Partnership made a collective commitment to work together for the benefit of the city region and to deliver sustainable economic growth and improved competitiveness. City Region Leaders agreed that the current Partnership needed to evolve to develop a more robust and accountable body to take forward this city region agenda, which will aim to improve the economic wellbeing of the whole city region.
2. City Region Leaders therefore agreed to establish a Leeds City Region Leaders' Board, comprising of the Partner Councils of Bradford, Calderdale, Craven, Harrogate, Kirklees, Leeds, North Yorkshire, Selby, Wakefield and York, which would be constituted as a Joint Committee. Annex 1 sets out the legal Agreement for establishing the Board, which has been agreed by City Region Leaders.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 To seek the agreement of the Executive Board to enter into an Agreement to establish a Joint Committee to be known as the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board.

2.0 Background Information

- 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 striking mix of rural and urban environments and areas of outstanding countryside.
- 2.2 As Members will be aware, the political Leaders of the eleven Partner Councils (which include North Yorkshire County Council who have strategic responsibilities 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. To that end the Partnership previously agreed a city region concordat 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 of those who live and work here.'*
- 2.3 Some clarity regarding city region governance arrangements is now required to enable pursuit of the ambitions of the city region set out in the Leeds City Region Development Programme (CRDP), which includes the long term Vision for Transport. Accordingly, the city region Leaders agreed on 11 September 2006 to develop a formal structure, a proposal for which is outlined in the attached Agreement.
- 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 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 roles/responsibilities of constituent authorities; proposals should also be complementary 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 on Regional Funding Allocations.
 - A mayoral system is not supported.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 A copy of the Agreement is attached as Appendix 1, which sets out the details that have been agreed by city region Leaders.

- 3.2 The Agreement establishes the Board and provides a framework for its 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 one member one 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 the Leader to represent their authority on the Board. In the event that a Leader cannot attend a meeting of the Board, a senior Member substitute such as a Deputy Leader or Executive Member will be allowed.
- 3.5 Although the Agreement provides for the Board to discharge the function of promoting the improvement of economic wellbeing in the City Region, this will not preclude or constrain member local authorities from promoting economic wellbeing 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 reside with the Board in the 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.
- 3.7 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 onto the Panels. The Panels will be able to establish multi-agency task groups to support them and the Board. Unlike the Board, Access to Information provisions will not apply to these Panels and Task Groups.

Resources

- 3.8 Current revenue spend on City Region work is primarily related to staffing of the secretariat; undertaking research; preparing published documents such as the CRDP, and organising events such as the national and regional launches of the CRDP. Currently, staffing costs are primarily borne by Leeds City Council, with financial and in-kind contributions from West Yorkshire Capacity Building, The Northern Way and a range of partner authorities.
- 3.9 It is not envisaged that additional resources will be required in the next financial year 2007/08, as ongoing arrangements can continue to be utilised. The Board will consider longer term resource requirements, and it has been agreed that any future council contributions should be in proportion to respective population levels.

Review

- 3.10 The operation of the Agreement will be reviewed by the Board after 12 months and annually thereafter.

Support Services Authority

- 3.11 Leeds City Council will be the initial Support Services Authority for the Board, continuing the existing city region support arrangements.

- 3.12 The new arrangements for the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board will take effect on 1 April 2007. The first meeting of the Board will take place on 2 April 2007.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 The Agreement provides for the City Region Leaders' Board to have discharged the local authority function of promoting the improvement of economic wellbeing in the City Region. However, this will not preclude or constrain partner local authorities from promoting economic wellbeing in their own areas - even where this entails the adoption of a position at variance with that of the city region.
- 4.2 Councillor Andrew Carter as the Leader of the Council, will represent the Council on the City Region Leaders' Board. All executive decisions at the city region level will remain with the Leaders' Board.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 As noted in Paragraph 3.9, it is not envisaged that there will be any significant additional costs [to the Council] in the next financial year over and above current staff input into city region work. However, some minimal additional staff time may be required from the Council's legal and financial officers in performing the statutory responsibilities of the Support Services Authority. Additional costs are likely to arise in the future as the work and responsibilities of the Board evolves, but these costs will be shared by all eleven local authorities, although these will be in proportion to respective population levels.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The new governance arrangements for the Leeds City Region will provide a more robust and accountable body for overseeing policy and delivery at the city region level. The Board will provide a more effective body to take forward the city region agenda, further developing joint working with all eleven partner councils on shared economic related priorities, which will result in increased agglomeration benefits.
- 6.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Board are likely to evolve over time, although these will only relate to where it can be demonstrated that there is 'added value' in working at the city region level. In the medium-long term, there may be opportunities for the decentralisation and devolution of activity and responsibilities from Government to the city region. This would have the potential to provide a more coherent and coordinated approach to improving the competitiveness of the economy of both Leeds and the wider Leeds City Region.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Executive Board is requested to approve the terms of the Agreement and authorise the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to seal the Agreement document on behalf of the Council.