



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

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The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
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Dear Judith,

12 February 2019

You will have seen that I wrote to the Mayor of Sheffield today regarding the proposal for a One Yorkshire “metro mayor,” about which you, the Mayor and a number of other Yorkshire council leaders had written to me.

You and your Yorkshire colleagues have also very helpfully sent me material looking at the economic case for the One Yorkshire idea together with a paper outlining the kind of governance you see might underpin a Yorkshire “metro mayor”. Jake Berry MP, Minister for Local Growth and the Northern Powerhouse, has also had detailed discussions with many of the Yorkshire leaders about the proposals.

We appreciate the enthusiasm and dedication that has come from yourself and the Yorkshire leaders in developing this idea of a whole Yorkshire devolution. Having carefully considered all the material we have received, we do understand the ambitions that you have for your areas, and I understand the value and potential that you see in harnessing local people’s sense of identity with Yorkshire. This is the context in which I am now writing to you to suggest how we might all now move forward with devolution in Yorkshire.

The One Yorkshire concept is novel. It focuses on an area that is far greater than any past local administrative area for Yorkshire or any of today’s functional economic city regions. It would involve significant departures from the type of devolution deals that we have successfully put in place elsewhere in terms of geography, governance and purpose. The mayoralty would cover the whole of Yorkshire – with a population of 5.5 million people and widely varying rural and urban areas with competing needs. Accordingly, the Government considers that the One Yorkshire devolution proposals do not meet our criteria for devolution.

However, we are prepared, if you and fellow local leaders wish, to begin discussions about a different, localist approach to devolution in Yorkshire. There is local appetite for other devolution elsewhere in Yorkshire, with representations, for example, having been made previously by the Leeds City Region, York and North Yorkshire and the Humber Estuary.

In line with current Government policy, we would be prepared to consider any proposals submitted. This would also be on the basis of the commitments to the people of Sheffield City Region through the completion of the Sheffield City Region devolution deal being

honoured. This remains a priority for the Government and indeed in the local area. This step is essential for talks to progress.

I believe this is a practical and realistic way forward. It recognises the wide support for devolution and provides a practical approach to make progress. It can equally, if this is the local wish, begin to deliver benefits in the short term to people and businesses in Yorkshire, including beginning the £900 million of new investment for the Sheffield City Region. I do hope you and your colleague leaders will agree that what I have outlined above could be a workable way forward. We are ready to begin discussions about first honouring our commitments to the Sheffield City Region and then about further steps to advance devolution in Yorkshire.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James Brokenshire', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'J'.

RT HON JAMES BROKESHIRE MP