Partnership to add impetus to Northern Powerhouse

The Northern Powerhouse Partnership will be launched today, Friday 16th September, to help maintain the momentum of the Northern Powerhouse and raise the prosperity of the north of England.

The Northern Powerhouse is a compelling vision to enable the cities and counties of the north of England to become greater than the sum of their parts and compete together on an international stage. This will help bring jobs and higher living standard to local people in the north - and it means giving people a much greater say over how their communities are run.

The key to delivering the Northern Powerhouse is a combination of a major devolution of power from Whitehall, including the creation of new elected metro mayors, along with major new investments in transport infrastructure, science, skills and culture. This will attract business, jobs and investment from the private sector and abroad.

The Government has made clear its determination to rebalance the economy of the UK. It recognises that supporting public investment and attracting private investment in the North of England to help boost its productivity and ensure that people living in the region can contribute to, and share in, the growth created is fundamental to achieving this goal. This is complementary to, rather than in competition with, the development of other regions of England.

The new Northern Powerhouse Partnership will add value to the work already underway by being a focus for research, intelligence and co-ordination with key stakeholders in the North of England to ensure that the vision continues to be developed and delivered.

The independent not-for-profit partnership will be chaired by George Osborne MP, who first outlined the Northern Powerhouse concept in a keynote speech in June 2014 and was a key exponent of the vision.
Its business-led board will feature influential business figures from across the North of England. There will also be political representation to ensure city leaders are represented and the Northern Powerhouse remains an all-party strategy.

The privately-funded partnership will be able to commission specialist research and work collaboratively with other organisations to produce research and insight from a pan-Northern perspective.

It will support the delivery of existing Northern Powerhouse commitments and develop the evidence base for taking the initiative further in areas such as skills, housing and research and innovation which are critical to realising the full potential of the ambition.

Another aspect of the partnership’s work will be supporting civic leaders including the newly-elected ‘metro’ mayors and the combined authorities they work with through innovative ideas and sharing examples of national and international best practice.

The partnership’s role will include advocating for the Northern Powerhouse as a fundamental part of the UK’s industrial strategy and promoting new ideas which will help the region’s 16 million people to share in its growing success.

What they say

The Rt Hon George Osborne MP, said: "When I launched the idea of Northern Powerhouse I said I would work tirelessly with anyone and everyone to make it a reality. But even I have been taken aback by the huge support it’s attracted, across political parties, businesses and communities.

"In the space of just two years, we’ve created powerful new mayors, committed to huge new transport and science projects, and attracted investment from around the world.

“There’s a real excitement now in the north about what we can achieve if we work together. I don’t want us to lose that. That's why I’m so pleased major businesses, civic leaders and others have worked with me to create this new Northern Powerhouse Partnership. I'm also glad that the government has given its support.

“Chairing this new Partnership will now be a major focus of my political energies. The Northern Powerhouse is here to stay."

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, said: "This government realises the huge untapped potential of our great northern towns and cities. That is why I warmly welcome the launch of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership."
“I hope it will become an important part of the debate and help us to do all we can to further boost jobs, growth and opportunities in the north of England.”

Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council, who has been instrumental in engaging northern local authorities with the Northern Powerhouse initiative via civic leaders, said: “The Northern Powerhouse initiative is about supporting and empowering the North to boost its productivity, create more wealth and jobs and make a greater contribution to the national economy. It’s about investing intelligently in proven strengths and the infrastructure and assets needed to support them.

“The Northern Powerhouse Partnership will help provide the insight and evidence base to drive the initiative forwards. The uncertainty following the Brexit vote in the EU referendum makes economic stability, confidence and support for strategic commitments such as the Northern Powerhouse more important than ever.”

Charlie Cornish, Chief Executive of MAG, said: “The importance of a strong Northern economy is more widely acknowledged than ever before and there is no doubt that the Northern Powerhouse vision has already shown the world that the region is both an attractive place to visit and to do business with.

“I welcome the formation of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership and we look forward to working with the other members to ensure a continued focus on increasing productivity, and improving transport links and investment across the North.

“Transport lies at the foundation of every successful economy and whilst connecting the North to the rest of the world is a crucial part of the equation, it is also imperative that the region is better connected with itself.

“Manchester Airport is thriving as a national asset, forming a key component of the UK’s aviation infrastructure at a time when airport capacity in the country is at a premium. We are proud of the role that we have played in driving economic growth – both across the North and the UK as a whole.”

Mark Reynolds, Chief Executive of Mace said: “New transport infrastructure and connectivity are absolutely vital for boosting growth, improving productivity, opening up opportunity and increasing wellbeing in the North of England. Mace has worked on major infrastructure and development schemes in the North for over 20 years, and we have seen first-hand the unrivalled passion, excitement and dedication of local people to turn the Northern Powerhouse from rhetoric to reality.

“The Northern Powerhouse Partnership will be the strong business voice the North needs and an important contributor to the future direction and development
of the North of England. Our British heritage means that Mace is especially committed to unleashing the North’s full potential.”

Tony Walsh, Head of the North, Corporate Banking at Barclays, said: “We are delighted to be involved with this initiative which underpins the very important work of the Northern Powerhouse.

“The North is a key component of Barclays’ footprint in the UK for both our corporate and retail banking businesses.

“We look forward to working with the other members of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership to ensure that the original vision continues to evolve and boost the economy within the region.”

James Cooper, Chief Executive, Associated British Ports, said: "ABP is delighted to support the Northern Powerhouse Partnership. Ports on both banks of the Humber handle trade worth £75 billion. The Humber is a vital gateway connecting businesses across the north to global markets and a key driver of future economic growth.”

**Powerhouse progress so far**

Significant strides have already been taken towards the creation of a Northern Powerhouse, with Transport for the North set up to deliver the One North strategy to improve east-west transport links between the city regions of Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and Newcastle – better connecting them with each other and international markets. Progress has also been made through Rail North in delivering greater local control of rail franchising.

Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and South Yorkshire have all agreed devolution deals with the Government, including the creation of elected mayors, giving them greater scope to help create the conditions for economic growth and reform public services to ensure local people are connected to it.

Investment is being made in the region’s science and innovation strengths. For example, in a world first the Health North partnership operating across the North of England is using large-scale data to drive innovation in health and social care by monitoring the effectiveness of different drugs, treatments and health pathways. Investment in the area’s cutting edge Science and innovation sector, for example the overseas and government investment in the Graphene Engineering Innovation Centre, is also helping the UK grow its world-leading research base in advanced materials.

The North already boasts world-class cultural assets from Opera North in Leeds to the Tate in Liverpool, Manchester International Festival and Yorkshire
Sculpture Park. The government’s funding commitment to The Factory arts venue due to open in Manchester in 2019 will further enrich the region’s offer.

Next steps

Rapid progress on HS2 and support implementation of the One North transport strategy – including Northern Powerhouse Rail – are vital for the success of the Northern Powerhouse.

So too is continuing focus on investment in the assets and infrastructure needed to support new employment and housing growth.

The recently-published Northern Independent Economic Review, commissioned by Transport for the North, found that the North of England has the potential to add £97 billion and 850,000 more jobs to the UK by 2050. Productivity in the region currently lags behind London and the South East but with the right focused support it has the potential to be truly globally competitive.

The North needs targeted investment in improved transport links and in its world-leading capabilities, identified by the independent review as advanced manufacturing, digital development, health innovation and energy. These are supported by three enabling capabilities which need to be nurtured to support this growth: education, logistics and financial and professional services.

It also needs to build on existing devolution with leaders further empowered to drive forwards growth and reform at a local level.

Promoting better outcomes for Northern schoolchildren is another issue which needs to be addressed. Sir Nick Weller already is leading an in-depth review into transforming education across the Northern Powerhouse and its recommendations are keenly awaited.

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