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6 January 2010

Dear Colleague

Leaders and Elected Mayors Board Scheme for the North East

The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act, which received Royal Assent in November, brings into force new arrangements for the development of a single regional strategy for every English region outside London.

The Act gives participating authorities a key role in the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategy, working in tandem with the regional development agency. This role is to be undertaken in a number of ways, but importantly through the establishment of a **Leaders and Elected Mayors Board** for the region, which will be one of two 'Responsible Regional Authorities', along with One North East.

The 'participating authorities' – in our case the 12 unitary authorities in the region and the Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) – must prepare a scheme setting out how they intend the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will work, consult on it and submit it to the Secretary of State for approval.

Government guidance requires the scheme to be consistent with the following criteria:

- it should be **streamlined and manageable**, able to make strategic, long-term decisions, and able to engage effectively with the region's RDA;
- it should be **representative** of local government across the region; and
- it should be comprised of **local authority leaders**, who are members with sufficient authority to act on behalf of all local government in the region. (Leaders and Elected Mayors Board members do not have to be Leaders of Councils but must have sufficient seniority and powers to be able to make binding decisions).

[A copy of the guidance can be accessed here.](#)

The attached scheme has been prepared for consultation. I should make it clear that the present consultation relates only to the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board scheme. Stakeholder engagement in the regional strategy is extremely important and we are developing proposals, with stakeholders, for taking this forward.

Responses to the following question are being sought:

“In your opinion, do the proposals for the establishment and operation of a Leaders and Elected Mayors Board for the North East meet the criteria in the Government guidance: namely that they are *streamlined and manageable* (able to make strategic long-term decisions and engage effectively with One North East); *representative* (of local government across the region); and *authoritative* (comprising local authority leaders with sufficient authority to act on behalf of all local government in the region).

Any other comments you may have on the scheme will also be welcome. Comments, which should be received no later than 5.00pm on 26 February 2010, should be sent to Brenda Joyce at the Association. Her contact details are as follows:

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Association of North East Councils
The Axis Building
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NE11 0NQ

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Email: brenda.joyce@northeastcouncils.gov.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Councillor Paul Watson
Chair, Association of North East Councils

For Consultation

LEADERS AND ELECTED MAYORS BOARD – DRAFT SCHEME

NORTH EAST ENGLAND

1. Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction (LDEDC) Act 2009, the participating authorities in the North East region are required to establish a Leaders' Board which, as one of the two 'Responsible Regional Authorities' (RRAs) in the region along with One North East, will exercise the functions prescribed by the Act in relation to the preparation and revision of the regional strategy for the North East.
2. The participating authorities therefore propose to establish a Leaders' Board, to be known as the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board, consisting of:
 - the Leader/Elected Mayor (or his/her nominated representative being a member of the authority) of each of the 12 unitary authorities in the region; and
 - the Chair (or his/her nominated representative being a member of the authority) of the Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA).
3. Meetings of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will be held on a six to eight week cycle. The business of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will be conducted in accordance with rules of procedure set out in Annex A.
4. The Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will also hold regular meetings with the Board of One North East to facilitate the exercise of the joint functions of the two RRAs. These meetings will be conducted in accordance with the (*draft*) joint protocol set out in Annex B.
5. The governance arrangements for the preparation of the regional strategy are set out in diagrammatic form in Annex C.
6. Dedicated support for the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board in its statutory role will be provided by the Chief Executive, staff and support structures of ANEC and by professional staff of participating authorities, city/sub-regions and other partners where appropriate in the region who are able to contribute expertise on specific issues. Where this relates to Regional Strategy development the Joint Strategy Team will also provide support and information to the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board. Funding for support for activities connected with Part 5 of the LDEDC Act (regional strategies) is provided by Communities and Local Government on production of a business plan. Having the right dedicated expertise available is extremely important and this will be kept under regular review so as to ensure that CLG funding is deployed appropriately.
7. Stakeholder engagement in the regional strategy is extremely important and is recognised not only by the formal requirement for the RRAs to produce a Statement of Policy on Community Involvement but in the approach that the

RRAs wish to see happen in the North East. The RRAs consider stakeholder engagement at a range of spatial levels and through a wide range of mechanisms to be vital. The Statement will set the framework for wide-ranging and effective cross-sectoral engagement and consultation through the strategy development process. Stakeholders are also participating in the various groups that support the RRAs in the development of the regional strategy, as set out in Annex C, and in other ways, through (for example) the futures and strategic direction-setting activity.

8. Those Leaders and Elected Mayors Board members who are the Leaders/Elected Mayors (or their nominated representatives) of the 12 unitary authorities in the region will also be responsible for the management and direction of the Association of North East Councils (ANEC), the representative body for local government in the North East. This work (which will be resourced by ANEC) will streamline working arrangements, while recognising that the statutory responsibility for the preparation of the regional strategy rests with the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board and One North East.

Leaders and Elected Mayors Board – Rules of Procedure

Membership and role

1. Under section 71 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will undertake the statutory role of a regional responsible authority in relation to all matters relating to the North East regional strategy and will consist of:
 - the Leader or Elected Mayor (or his/her nominated representative being a member of that authority) of each of the 12 unitary authorities in the North East; and
 - the Chair (or his/her nominated representative being a member of the Authority) of the Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA).
2. Each member shall be entitled to one vote.
3. Any nominated representative will speak and act with the same authority as the person who nominated him/her. This provision also applies to any named alternate appointed under paragraph 4 below.
4. If any member of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board is unable to attend a meeting, a named alternate may attend, provided that he/she is an elected member of the council concerned or a member of the NNPA, as the case may be. Any such named alternate will have the same voting rights as the person whose place he/she is taking.
5. The unitary authorities and NNPA will notify the Chief Executive of ANEC of their representation on the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board annually. In the event that the Leader or Elected Mayor of an authority (or his/her nominated representative) ceases to hold that office for whatever reason, the authority concerned shall immediately inform the Chief Executive of ANEC of that fact and of the identity of his/her replacement as soon as it is known. If there is a vacancy in the office of Leader/Elected Mayor (or his/her nominated representative), the authority may appoint a member to fill that vacancy for its duration. The like provisions will apply in the case of a vacancy in the office of Chair or his/her nominated representative of the NNPA.

Operational Arrangements

6. The Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will hold meetings at a frequency of approximately every six to eight weeks in accordance with a programme to be agreed.
7. One of these meetings will be designated as the Annual Meeting and will be held, in a year when there are elections to any of the authorities, as soon as possible after the date of such elections; otherwise, on a date in May or June.
8. The Chair may (a) cancel any programmed meeting if he/she considers that the business for such meeting is insufficient to justify holding it (b) call a

special meeting provided at least fourteen days notice is given (unless for reasons of urgency it is necessary to call a meeting at shorter notice, in which case as much notice as possible will be given, subject always to compliance with Access to Information regulations).

9. Meetings will be held at locations within the region, with the aim of rotating meetings around the region as far as is practicable.
10. The Chief Executive will ensure that an agenda for each meeting is despatched to every member of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board not less than seven days before the meeting.
11. The accounts relating to the CLG-funded expenditure undertaken by the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board as set out in the Business Plan will be audited as part of the overall accounting arrangements for CLG-funded activity provided by ANEC.
12. Any assets, property and liabilities held or incurred by the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board and funded through Government grant will be held by ANEC on behalf of all the authorities (which for this purpose includes NNPA), who will indemnify ANEC in respect of any liability which may arise in respect of their holding.

Chair and Vice-Chairs

13. At its Annual Meeting, the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will elect from its membership a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, one of whom will be a representative of the majority party as designated by ANEC and one of whom will be a representative of the minority parties as designated by ANEC.
14. The Chair, or a Vice-Chair, will cease to hold office if he/she:
 - resigns that office, or
 - ceases to be the Leader/Elected Mayor or nominated representative of the authority that appointed him/her.
15. Any vacancy in the office of Chair or Vice-Chair shall be filled at the next meeting of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board following the occurrence of the vacancy.

Conduct of Meetings

16. Subject to the provisions below, any issues relating to the conduct of the meeting will be determined by the person presiding at the meeting. Each member is bound by their authority's code of conduct, based on the Standards Board for England's revised Model Code of Conduct.
17. The Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will aim to reach decisions by consensus. In particular it will seek wherever possible to agree a single position on behalf of local government on issues relating to the preparation and sign-off of the regional strategy. If, exceptionally, it is not possible to reach consensus on any matter on which it is necessary to reach a decision,

the matter will be put to a vote. If the votes are equal, the Chair of the meeting will have a second or casting vote.

18. The quorum for meetings of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will be five. Named alternates will be taken into account in determining whether a quorum is present.
19. The Leaders and Elected Mayors Board will agree protocols relating to:
 - communicating with the media; and
 - communication with members of the Leaders Board between meetings, including arrangements for taking any decisions that may be needed as a matter of urgency. These will include provision for the calling of urgent meetings by the Chair, actions which might be delegated to the Chair and Vice-Chairs etc.

Observers

20. Attendance of unitary authority and NNPA Chief Executives (or their representatives) at Leaders and Elected Mayors Board meetings will be a matter for each member to determine.

Access to Information

21. Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Regional Strategy) (England) Regulations 2010 will apply (subject to Parliamentary approval) as regards access to meetings and documents of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board. The Chief Executive shall be empowered to make all arrangements necessary for compliance with the Regulations.

Support

22. The Chief Executive will ensure that appropriate professional, technical and administrative expertise and support is provided to the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board, both through the staff of ANEC and where appropriate through the staff of participating authorities and partners. The Chief Executive will take appropriate steps to secure funding for support of the statutory role of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board through the business planning arrangements with Communities and Local Government that are currently in force.

Alterations to Rules of Procedure

23. Any alterations to these rules of procedure shall be made at an Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board.

Joint Meetings with One NorthEast

24. To facilitate the exercise of the joint responsibilities of the RRAs in relation to the regional strategy, a programme of regular joint meetings will be arranged and conducted in accordance with a protocol to be agreed between the

Leaders and Elected Mayors Board and the Board of One North East (*a draft of which is attached as Annex B*).

Draft for consultation - 4 January 2010

Joint Meetings between Leaders and Elected Mayors Board and Board of One North East

Draft Protocol

Principles

1. It is recognised that:
 - the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board and the One North East Board are the ultimate decision-making bodies for the Regional Strategy – the Responsible Regional Authorities; and
 - a genuinely collaborative approach between local authorities, One North East and other partners (through strong, effective stakeholder engagement) is needed if we are to produce an excellent Regional Strategy.
2. To facilitate the exercise of the responsibilities of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board and the Board of One North East, a programme of regular joint meetings will be arranged, with the role of providing a forum for discussion, consideration and development of the Regional Strategy, discussion on what is to be submitted to the Government, its implementation and the monitoring of its delivery.

Arrangements for meetings

3. The participants in the joint meetings will be:
 - the members of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board (or their named alternate); and
 - the members of the One North East Board.
4. Officers of ANEC and One North East will co-ordinate a programme of meetings for the forthcoming year. Meetings will take place at approximately two-monthly intervals or more frequently if and when required. To minimise demands on members' time, meetings will where practicable be arranged with regard to existing commitments.
5. Meetings will be held at mutually convenient locations around the region.
6. Officer attendance at joint meetings will comprise three local authority Chief Executives (to include the Chair of the ANEC Regional Chief Executives Group), the ANEC Chief Executive and the One North East Chief Executive plus appropriate support staff.
7. Secretariat support will be provided jointly by ANEC and One North East with advice being provided through the agreed advice and support structure. The agenda and papers for each joint meeting will be jointly prepared by officers of ANEC and One North East on the basis of advice from the relevant support groups and will be circulated to all members at least seven days in advance.

Either the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board or the Board of ONE North East may require such papers to be considered by either Board before the joint meeting and in this case, papers will be circulated at least seven days in advance of the meeting of those Boards. Minutes and action notes will be provided as soon as possible after each meeting.

8. The advice and support structure referred to above will include a series of advisory groups, whose Terms of Reference may be determined jointly by the RRAs from time to time.

Conduct of meetings

9. Meetings will be chaired alternately by the Chairs of the RRAs. The quorum* for each joint meeting shall be [x] members of the One North East Board and [x] members of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board. **Subject to discussion and agreement.*
10. Each of the partners in the joint meetings has statutory responsibility for the Regional Strategy. The meetings are held with the aim of reaching an understanding, influencing and building consensus on the Regional Strategy. As such, it is intended that decisions should be reached either unanimously or by consensus, if necessary over a series of meetings.
11. Where agreement cannot be reached between the RRAs on the final draft strategy, further meetings will be held or other means used, by agreement between the Boards, to seek to secure consensus.
12. In the unlikely event that areas of disagreement remain, and the RRAs are unable to agree on a draft strategy to submit, Ministers may direct them to submit separate statements detailing their disagreements and any papers that have been prepared.

Engagement and consultation

13. The joint meetings will determine and ensure arrangements for:
 - engagement and consultation on the Regional Strategy with a range of stakeholders including the business community, including through the production of a Statement of Policy on Community Involvement; and
 - the handling of communications and the media in relation to the Regional Strategy.

Urgent business

14. Where an item of business is of such urgency and significance that a decision is required before the next programmed joint meeting, a report on the matter, with recommendations, will be circulated electronically to all members of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board and the Board of One North East, specifying a deadline for response. If no expression of disagreement is received before the deadline, the recommendations will be acted upon by the Chief Executives of ANEC and ONE and a report made to the next joint meeting for information. If there are any areas of disagreement, these will be

referred to the Chairs of the Leaders and Elected Mayors Board and the Board of One North East to resolve. If it is still not possible to resolve the disagreement, no action will be taken by the Chief Executives of ANEC and ONE until the matter has been considered at a joint meeting.

Governing documents

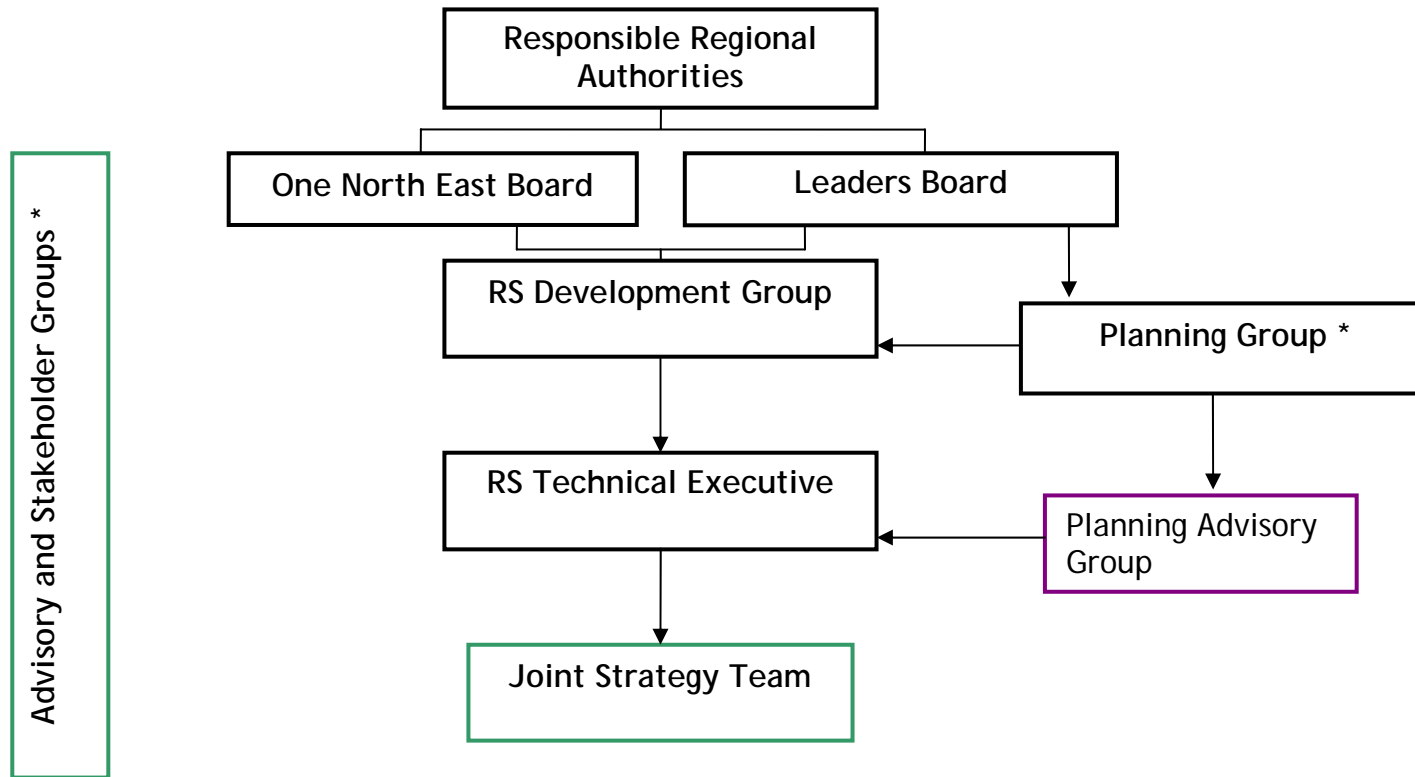
15. The One North East Board is bound to abide by its own Standing Orders in all its activities, processes and decision making and may not do anything that contravenes those Standing Orders. The Leaders' and Elected Mayors Board is governed by its Rules of Procedure.

Conflicts of interest

16. Participants should not have any personal financial interest in decisions or have any conflicts of interest arising from other directorships, business or personal interests which could materially interfere with the exercise of their independent judgement. Participants should deal with any actual or potential conflict of interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the body they represent.
17. Each of the bodies comprising the RRAs maintains a register of interests and all participants are required to provide on a continuing basis information concerning financial or other interests which could interfere with the exercise of their independent judgment.

ANNEX C

The governance arrangements for the development of the Regional Strategy are set out below:



*Arrangements for some of the groups are being devised as the guidance and legislation progresses.