

Future North West: Our Shared Priorities

Executive Summary

August 2010

Our North West

The North West of England is a great place to live, work, learn, visit and invest. It has Europe's 12th largest economy with excellent international connections via our ports and airports. It is the UK's largest manufacturing region, home to some of the world's leading companies. It has exceptional strengths in the nuclear industry, with half the UK's civil nuclear workforce, as well as real strengths in the bio-medical and digital and creative sectors including MediaCityUK.

We have a long and proud history. The North West was the birthplace of the industrial revolution and home to many inventions such as the splitting of the atom and the world's first intercity passenger railway. We also have a strong and unique tradition of working together in partnership to achieve our shared goals.

The North West offers a diverse quality of life that is second to none. It has vibrant world cities such as Manchester and Liverpool, areas of outstanding beauty such as the Lake District, historic cities such as Chester,

Lancaster and Carlisle and a superb coastline. It is also home to some of the best universities in the world and has fantastic cultural and sporting offers. But, above all, it is the 6.9 million people who live here that make this place special.

Future North West: Our Shared Priorities sets out a clear, and we believe compelling, course of action for the North West over the next 20 years. It builds on a substantial programme of work over the last two years, which provides a strong evidence-based understanding not only of the North West's strengths and unique offer but also the most important challenges and issues we face in the years ahead. It has been developed through close collaboration between partners covering the private, public and third sectors throughout the North West – as a bottom-up rather than top-down document – and takes account of the results of two public consultation exercises as well as a sustainability assessment.

The challenge we face

At the time of writing, in mid-2010, we are just coming out of a major recession and face large reductions in public expenditure in the years ahead. Growth in the late 20th century and early 21st century was largely driven by the public sector, consumerism and credit. There is now a need to rebalance the economy and look at how we can use our assets in different ways.

We can therefore expect to see a stronger emphasis on manufacturing and low carbon technologies, social enterprise, energy and food security, plus shifting consumption patterns including more efficient use of natural resources. We do know that the future is very uncertain, with the likelihood of rapid technological and social changes, which themselves could drive growth. We need increasingly to look outwards to Europe and indeed across the globe for opportunities.

More fundamentally, future growth will need to be driven far more by private rather than public sector investment and we will need to look primarily to the private sector to generate jobs in the coming years. The scale of this challenge is important to recognise. Our firms have dramatically improved their productivity which has meant the loss of 20,000 jobs over the last five years. Our economy will need to gain in the order of 200,000 private sector jobs over the next few years if we are to contribute towards government ambitions for UK growth and replace lost public sector employment.

We know that, in addition, we have specific, long standing issues to resolve if we are to build our economic prosperity and quality of life. These include increasing skills, employment, and enterprise levels that are currently among the lowest in the UK, as well as tackling ill-health, poor housing and areas of considerable deprivation. These are alongside global challenges of long-term resilience, scarcer natural resources (including food and energy) and the need to adapt to unavoidable climate change.

Our 20-year vision

We have a very clear vision of what we want the North West to be like in 20 years time, and what this means for different areas.

Vision

The quality of life for the people of the North West will be excellent and the area will become more prosperous, more equitable and low carbon. By 2030 it will be a better place to live, learn, work, visit and invest in, with:

- job opportunities for all in a highly productive, well-skilled, internationally competitive, knowledge-based and resource-efficient economy which is adapting to climate change and living within environmental limits; and
- high levels of health and social wellbeing, minimal deprivation and child poverty, good housing and excellent physical and digital connectivity;

and where:

- Manchester will be a key generator of wealth for the North West, and an important driver of growth across the North as a whole;
- Liverpool will be a world-class cultural city, a major driver of economic growth and an international gateway;
- the international potential of the Liverpool-Manchester corridor will have been developed;
- Preston and Warrington will be key growth centres for the North West;
- Crewe, Chester, Lancaster and Carlisle will play important roles as sub-regional growth hubs;
- the role of the Lake District, and other outstanding natural and built assets, in contributing to the North West's image and wellbeing of its residents will have been enhanced;
- those parts of Pennine Lancashire, Blackpool, Barrow and West Cumbria, as well as areas within the Manchester and Liverpool conurbations, which face substantial social and economic challenges will have been revitalised; and
- there will be thriving, economically and socially sustainable towns and communities in both rural and urban areas.

Achieving that vision

We have developed **Future North West** to provide clear direction on how we intend to work together to create a more adaptable and resilient North West, and drive sustainable growth in a rapidly changing environment to achieve our vision. It is not and cannot be about everything that happens in the North West. It therefore focuses on where it makes sense to advocate and tackle issues at a North West level and does not cover activity more appropriate for international, national, sub-regional or local levels. In practice, this means addressing the most important strategic priorities in ways that are aspirational, add value and support the integration of economic, environmental and social goals.

The aim is to provide a clear framework to guide decision making at all levels across the North West – by private, public and third sectors – to drive complementary and sustainable growth in all areas. We know what we want to achieve and have established four overarching themes as the framework for activity over the next 20 years.

These themes and related outcomes and objectives are summarised below. The full document sets these out in more detail together with the issues on which we intend to focus action and the measures we will use to assess progress.

Theme 1: Capitalise on the opportunities of moving to a low carbon economy and society, and address climate change and resource efficiency

This theme will deliver the following outcomes:

- A leading, low carbon economy, using resources sustainably and adapting to the impact of climate change.
- Increased productivity, capitalising on the North West's innovation, science and research assets and exploiting potential in worldwide opportunities from low carbon technologies.

By pursuing the following objectives:

- 1a: Make the North West a world-class place for nuclear technologies, renewable energy and low carbon goods and services.
- 1b: Ensure the North West understands and adapts to the implications of unavoidable climate change.
- 1c: Stimulate key sectors, including housing, transport and industry, to develop low carbon, resource-efficient solutions and alternatives.

Theme 2: Build on our sources of international competitive advantage and distinctiveness

This theme will deliver the following outcomes:

- Vibrant and attractive cities, towns and rural areas, capitalising on the North West's rich culture, heritage, sport and university assets.
- Increased levels of enterprise, trade and foreign direct investment and excellent conditions for sustainable business growth.
- Increased productivity, capitalising on the North West's innovation, science and research assets and exploiting potential in worldwide opportunities from low carbon technologies.

By pursuing the following objectives:

- 2a: Develop our strength in internationally competitive manufacturing, biomedical and digital and creative industries
- 2b: Maximise the international potential of our knowledge-based assets.
- 2c: Improve our international connectivity.
- 2d: Develop our world class sporting, culture and quality of place offer.

Theme 3: Release the potential of our people and tackle poverty

This theme will deliver the following outcomes:

- Communities and places which are sustainable and safe, less deprived and less disadvantaged.
- A world-class skills base, improved education, talent attracted and retained, as well as improved basic, intermediate and graduate level skills.
- A healthy population, with reduced health inequalities, and capitalising on economic opportunities from changing health issues.
- Improved range and depth of employment opportunities for all. Areas of opportunity and need linked, significantly reduced low employment rates and improved supply of labour to businesses.

By pursuing the following objectives:

- 3a: Increase the potential of the workforce by improving employment opportunities, enterprise and skills.
- 3b: Build on our strong third sector and social enterprise.
- 3c: Revitalise areas with deep-seated economic and social challenges and build strong communities.
- 3d: Tackle the serious challenges raised by multiple disadvantage.
- 3e: Address the implications of demographic change for our workforce and services.

Theme 4: Ensure the right housing and infrastructure for sustainable growth

This theme will deliver the following outcomes:

- Balanced housing markets that support economic growth, strengthen inclusion and ensure access to well-designed, high-quality, affordable housing in mixed, sustainable communities.
- High-quality, reliable and efficient infrastructure, transport and digital networks which ensure that the North West is better connected, both locally and internationally.
- High-quality, efficient and responsive public services.
- The quality of the North West's outstanding environmental, natural and coastal assets maintained and enhanced.

By pursuing the following objectives:

- 4a: Secure a high-quality housing offer in locations which support sustainable economic growth and communities.
- 4b: Ensure high-quality digital connectivity.
- 4c: Improve internal connectivity through a sustainable transport infrastructure which better connects opportunity and need.
- 4d: Develop the critical infrastructure the region needs to support sustainable economic growth.
- 4e: Safeguard the natural environment and develop green infrastructure.

Future North West creates a framework in which places can prosper. The challenge is to drive mutually-reinforcing (rather than competitive) growth, where growth or action in one part of the North West can support other parts – such as the nuclear industry, which is strong across the North West, or by recognising that flood risk in Greater Manchester is directly related to upland management in Pennine Lancashire. This framework therefore recognises the important role of our well-established local area partnerships in delivering priorities, as well as the importance of strong links with neighbouring countries and regions.

We are committed to securing economic growth within environmental limits, since this is a fundamental requirement of sustainable development. The health, wellbeing and prosperity of the North West are dependent on the provision of a wide range of environmental services, and the natural environment is also highly valued by the people of the North West for its own sake. An understanding of environmental limits is crucial, so we have identified the most important limits and how they should be addressed.

What are the 'big ticket' issues for the North West?

While we are clear about what we want to achieve over the next 20 years, we cannot tackle everything straight away with equal priority, particularly in the early years when we face substantial public expenditure constraints. It is clear that we must prioritise a small number of absolutely fundamental issues for North West partners to put their collective weight behind.

Through our integrated analysis of the economic, social and environmental issues underlying the four themes, we have identified twelve 'big ticket' issues in which we believe progress must be made if we are to achieve our

aspirations to develop a world-class and resilient sustainable economy, attractive to private investment, with an excellent quality of life. In some cases, they are cross-cutting issues which are important to delivering across all four themes. Others are critical to the future success of the North West in their own right. In delivering them, we will seek to maintain our successful record of physical and economic renewal of our cities and towns while improving the economic and social sustainability of smaller communities.

The 'big ticket' issues to be addressed across the North West are:

1. Develop the **enterprise capabilities** of our people through education and skills.
2. Develop our world-leading **advanced manufacturing, biomedical and digital and creative industries**.
3. Develop our world-class **research, science and innovation** capability, particularly at Daresbury.
4. Develop our **low carbon energy offer**, especially in nuclear and marine renewables, for example through the Energy Coast initiative.
5. Develop **Next Generation Access** digital connectivity.
6. Improve **rail connectivity** across the North West and tackle **transport pinch points**, especially the Northern Hub and securing High Speed Rail access.
7. Improve **international connectivity** via Manchester Airport and Liverpool Superport.
8. Reduce levels of **ill-health, health inequalities, poverty and worklessness**.
9. Increase the number, and quality, of **private and third sector jobs and social enterprises**.
10. Develop our **sport, culture and quality of place** offer, based on our world-famous places, heritage and environmental assets, particularly Manchester, Liverpool, Chester and the Lake District.
11. **Enhance our natural environment** and resolve emerging pinch points in our **critical** (utilities) and **green infrastructure**.
12. Ensure high-quality, energy efficient and affordable **housing** in the right locations.

The full document sets out just why these issues are the most critical to the future of the North West, including the scale of the challenge and ambition.

Substantial progress in these areas will help to build a more adaptable and resilient North West. It will not only focus on the importance of wealth creation, but also on the importance of having a strong North West identity, based on its people and physical, environmental and cultural attributes.

What happens next?

We are publishing **Future North West** as a 'living document' ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review. We are inviting feedback and comments over a two-month period until 8th October 2010. We will then publish a final version, taking account of comments received, following the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Copies of the full document, and its associated Sustainability Assessment, including details of how to provide feedback and comments can be obtained from the following websites:

www.4nw.org.uk

www.nwda.co.uk/futurenorthwest

In conclusion

We are excited about the future and believe that the clear and compelling strategic direction provided by **Future North West** will ensure a globally-competitive and exciting, vibrant place in which to live, learn, work and invest in 20 years time. It is based on a sophisticated knowledge base and insight into the shape, size and geography of the North West, and is both strategic and penetrative in identifying the issues we must address to make the North West a successful place. This cannot be done by any business, agency or group in isolation. Making the North West excellent will depend on building on our already exemplary tradition of strong and effective partnership working. We hope that partners will therefore consider how they can help deliver the shared priorities for the North West in the coming years.



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