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**NORTH EAST ENGLAND LEADERS' BOARD**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor John Williams, Leader**

**Responsible Director – Ada Burns, Chief Executive**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet that the proposed scheme meets the requirements of government guidance.

**Summary**

2. 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.
3. 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 Board for the region, which will be one of two 'Responsible Regional Authorities' along with One North East.
4. The 'participating authorities' which in the case of the North East means the 12 Unitary Authorities and the Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) must prepare a scheme setting out how they intend the Leaders Board will work, consult on it and submit it to the Secretary of State for Approval.
5. Government guidance sets out the criteria with which the scheme must be consistent. A copy of the guidance (**Appendix 1**) and the proposed scheme (**Appendix 2**) are attached to this report.
6. This report provides details of the proposals for establishing a Leaders' Board in the North East for the purpose of exercising the functions prescribed in the Act regarding the preparation and revision of the regional strategy for the area. The report also seeks confirmation of the Leader of the Council, and his nominated substitute, as the Authority's representatives on the Board and also recommends that Cabinet agrees to the Leader and his nominated representative having the necessary decision-making powers to carry out the functions. The report will be referred to Council to enable any relevant non-executive functions to be delegated.

## **Recommendations**

7. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (a) Notes the proposed scheme for establishing a Leaders Board for the North East region.
  - (b) Confirms the Leader of the Council as the Authority's representative on the Board.
  - (c) Agrees that the Leader's nominated representative on the Board will be the Deputy Leader of the Council.
  - (d) Agrees that the Leader and his nominated representative are granted all necessary executive powers on behalf of the Authority regarding the functions prescribed in Part 5 of the Local Authority, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 in relation to the preparation and revision of the regional strategy for the North East.
  - (e) The report is referred to Council for approval to be given in relation to non-executive powers. Subject to this, the Constitution be amended accordingly.

## **Reasons**

8. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons
- (a) To ensure that Members are aware of and agree with the proposals for establishing a Leaders' Board for the North East.
  - (b) The Council's principal representative on the proposed Board needs to be confirmed.
  - (c) Similarly, the Leader's nominated substitute for the Board has to be approved.
  - (d) To ensure that the Leader and his nominated representative have the necessary authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council in relation to the preparation and revision of the regional strategy for the North East.
  - (e) This recognises that the Constitution will need to be amended to reflect the decision-making powers granted to the Leader and his nominated representative.

**Ada Burns**  
**Chief Executive**

## **Background Papers**

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

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S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	There are no specific implications for Health and Well being
Sustainability	The functions prescribed in the Act regarding regional strategies are of relevance to economic sustainability, the development and use of land and the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.
Diversity	This report has not been the subject of an Equalities Impact Assessment
Wards Affected	All Wards are affected equally
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally
Budget and Policy Framework	This does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework. This report will be referred to full Council for consideration because it involves constitutional changes.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The creation of a Leaders and Mayor's Board is a requirement of legislation
Efficiency	Funding for support of the activities connected with regional strategies and the exercise of the related functions prescribed in the Act is intended to be provided by Communities and Local Government

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

9. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (“the Act”) received Royal Assent on 12 November and brings into force new arrangements for the development of a single regional strategy for every English region outside London.
10. 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’ Board (“the Board”) for the North East region, which will be one of two “Responsible Regional Authorities”, along with ONE North East.
11. The “participating authorities”, which in the North East’s case are the 12 Unitary Authorities in the region, plus the Northumberland National Park Authority, must prepare a scheme setting out how they intend the Board to work, consult on it and submit it to the Secretary of State for approval.
12. Government guidance, a copy of which is attached for information at Appendix 1, requires the scheme to be consistent with the following criteria:
  - (a) It should be streamlined and manageable, able to make strategic, long-term decisions, and able to engage effectively with the region’s RDA (ONE North East)
  - (b) It should be representative of local government across the region.
  - (c) The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (“the Act”) received Royal Assent on 12 November and brings into force new arrangements for the development of a single regional strategy for every English region outside London.
13. 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. (Members of the Board do not have to be leaders of Councils but must have sufficient seniority and powers to be able to make binding decisions). In response to the guidance, the Association of North East Councils (“ANEC”) prepared a draft scheme for a Leaders’ Board for the North East. Chief Executives, Leaders and Elected Mayors of all the participating authorities were consulted on the draft scheme and were asked to confirm that it met the criteria outlined in the previous paragraph of this report. A response was required by 26 February.
14. A copy of the draft scheme is attached at Appendix 2.
15. In accordance with ANEC’s request and following consideration of the proposals by the Tees Valley Leaders and Elected Mayors, it has been confirmed on behalf of the Council that the draft Scheme does meet the criteria specified in Government guidance.
16. Cabinet is, therefore, asked to ratify this decision and the proposals for establishing a Leaders’ Board for the North East. Information regarding further progress in this regard will be provided as and when it becomes available. It should also be emphasised that these proposals do not cover the process of preparing the regional strategy, nor do they concern the policy on the expected content and outcomes of such strategies. These will be the

subject of separate guidance and a further report to Cabinet in due course.

17. In accordance with the Government guidance, the draft Scheme for the Board for the North East provides that the Board will consist of the Leader/Elected Mayor of each of the region's 12 Unitary Authorities.
18. Cabinet is therefore asked to confirm the Leader of the Council as the Authority's representative on the proposed Board. The draft Scheme also envisages that there will be nominated representatives, who have to be councillors, who can act in the absence of the Leaders/Elected Mayors. Cabinet is also therefore asked to agree Councillor Dixon, as the Leader's nominated representative on the Board.
19. The Act, Government guidance and the draft Leaders Board Scheme, envisage that the Board will be able to make strategic, long-term decisions regarding the regional strategy for the North East, engaging effectively with One North East in doing so. The guidance talks specifically of effective and timely decision-making at the appropriate level and Board Members having sufficient powers to be able to make binding decisions on behalf of their authorities.
20. In light of this, it is proposed that the Leader and his nominated representative are granted all necessary delegated powers to exercise the functions relating to the preparation and revision of the regional strategy for the North East, as prescribed in the Act.
21. To facilitate the exercise of these powers, prior to Board meetings and joint meetings with One North East, the proposed business will be discussed with the Chief Executive, relevant Corporate Directors and such Members as may be considered necessary or appropriate. Such discussions will also take place in advance of any decisions which may be required between Leaders' Board meetings and joint meetings with One North East, due to reasons of urgency.
22. Minutes of Board meetings and of joint meetings with One North East will be reported to Cabinet/Council.
23. Details of any urgent decisions taken between Board meetings and between the joint meetings with One North East will be made known to all Members, subject to any requirements of confidentiality.
24. The Constitution will need to be amended to reflect the delegation of decision-making powers set out in paragraph 12 of the report.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

25. There has been no public consultation in relation to this report.