



BRIEFING PAPER

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The Northern Powerhouse

By Nehal Bradley-Depani;
Louise Butcher; Mark
Sandford

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Summary

This briefing paper provides a general overview of the UK Government's plans for a "Northern Powerhouse". It explains the origins of the Northern Powerhouse concept, the policy and funding commitments set out by Government, the implications for changes in governance and a look at the future in light of the policies of the new Prime Minister, Theresa May, and the UK's decision to leave the European Union.

The Northern Powerhouse is an initiative developed by the 2010-15 Coalition Government, in partnership with local authorities in the North of England, to address a constellation of issues surrounding economic growth and productivity in that part of the country. It was championed in Government by the former Chancellor, George Osborne. Since leaving office, he has become chair of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, a think tank whose [aim](#) is to bring together business and local politicians to commission research, share ideas, and lobby Whitehall to press ahead with devolution.

It is generally accepted that the Northern Powerhouse extends across the three previous 'standard regions' of the North-East, North-West and Yorkshire & Humber. However, some, whilst using this definition for the North more generally, appear to restrict the definition of the 'Northern Powerhouse' to the city-regions within that area.

While there has been some uncertainty as to the content of the Northern Powerhouse concept (i.e. whether it covers skills and business – particularly SME – growth more widely), it is generally agreed that transport, culture and science and innovation fall within its remit. What is not clear is which of the schemes and funding that fall under the Northern Powerhouse heading are previous, rebranded commitments and which are commitments that would not otherwise have been made were it not for the Northern Powerhouse concept.

That said, there is widespread support across the North for more powers to be devolved and for Government to assist those areas seeking to grow and develop, as part of a longer-term aim of rebalancing the economy, both between North and South and services and manufacturing. It may be that the Northern Powerhouse, and its neighbour to the south, the Midlands Engine, will form a key part of the Government's renewed emphasis on an industrial strategy.

Further information on local governance and transport can be found on the [topical pages of the Parliament website](#).

1. Background

1.1 What is the 'Northern Powerhouse'?

The phrase 'Northern Powerhouse' has been applied to a number of different policy commitments from 2014 onwards. There is no authoritative definition of the concept, or statement of aims or desired outcomes. It is necessary to infer these from Government policy documents and announcements.

The Northern Powerhouse is an initiative to address a constellation of issues surrounding economic growth and productivity in the North of England. Government publications have also addressed associated matters such as skills, transport infrastructure, and connectivity, plus the agenda of 'devolution deals'. Some think-tanks have called for the inclusion of further policy areas, such as education, health, employment, energy and broadband infrastructure.¹

There is no clear distinction between initiatives labelled as part of the Northern Powerhouse and broader Government policy towards the North of England. Likewise, although a number of spending commitments associated with the Northern Powerhouse have been published, it is difficult to establish how far these constitute additional spending above the norm.

The breadth of the Northern Powerhouse policy, and the absence of an authoritative document and success metrics, has led to accusations that the Northern Powerhouse is ill-defined or unclear.² It has been described as an "umbrella concept – providing definition to strategies and policies with the overall objective of contributing to the growth of the economy of the North".³

1.2 Origins of the Northern Powerhouse

The phrase 'Northern Powerhouse' was first used by the then Chancellor, George Osborne, in a speech on 23 June 2014:

I'm here to talk to you today about what we can do to make the cities of the north a powerhouse for our economy again – with new transport and science and powerful city governance.

The cities of the north are individually strong, but collectively not strong enough. The whole is less than the sum of its parts. So the powerhouse of London dominates more and more. And that's not healthy for our economy. It's not good for our country. We need a Northern Powerhouse too.⁴

¹ See, for instance, IPPR, [Northern Schools: putting education at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse](#), 2016; TfN, [Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review](#), 2016.

² See, for instance, Andrew Bounds, Chris Tighe and Henry Mance, ["Liverpool and Manchester want clarity on 'Northern Powerhouse'"](#), *Financial Times*, 4 August 2016

³ UK Northern Powerhouse, [Building the Northern Powerhouse: next steps for transformation](#), April 2016

⁴ Rt Hon George Osborne MP, [Chancellor: 'We need a Northern powerhouse'](#), 23 June 2014

He then outlined four key priority areas for realising the Northern Powerhouse: transport, science and innovation, creating creative clusters, and devolving power to local areas. These themes were explored further in the 2014 Autumn Statement:

...Economic analysis of urban growth in recent decades has highlighted three key themes. First, the importance of great cities linking together, particularly with strong transport connections. The Chancellor commissioned Sir David Higgins, Chairman of HS2 Ltd, to consider how to improve east-west connections across the north, a concept supported in the One North report, and in November 2014 the Deputy Prime Minister hosted Northern Futures to develop further ideas for growth in the north.

1.186 Second, in a knowledge-based economy, cities are the crucial locations for science and innovation clusters. The northern regions are home to seven of the 24 Russell Group Universities. The Chancellor asked the government's Chief Scientist, Mark Walport, to examine in which fields northern universities had globally significant scientific expertise.

1.187 Finally, the importance of strong civic leadership and a varied cultural offering. Studies have shown that innovators and entrepreneurs are attracted to work in creative and cultural areas, which offer a high quality of life. Strong civic leadership is instrumental in enabling this. In addition, research by the OECD shows that cities around the world with fragmented governance structures have lower levels of productivity than those that do not. The Chancellor started discussions with Greater Manchester about a metro Mayor in the autumn.

1.188 In this Autumn Statement, the government is taking further action on each of these themes to create a northern powerhouse, investing over £7 billion.⁵

The Conservative Party's manifesto for the 2015 General Election gave further specific commitments:

By connecting up the North with modern transport links, we will enable its great cities and towns to pool their strengths. We will invest a record £13 billion in transport for the North. We will electrify the main rail routes, build the Northern Hub, and provide new trains for the North. We will upgrade the A1, M62, M1 and A555 link road. And that is on top of our £50 billion commitment to build High Speed 2 – the new North-South railway linking up London with the West Midlands, Leeds and Manchester – and develop High Speed 3 to join up the North. We will back scientific and technical strengths by creating new institutions such as Health North; the Royce Institute for Advanced Materials in Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield; the National Centre for Ageing Science and Innovation in Newcastle; the Cognitive Computing centre at Daresbury; and by making investments in energy research in Blackpool, Cumbria and Thornton.⁶

The 2016 Budget set out the main policy areas covered by the concept:

The Northern Powerhouse is the government's vision for the North of England. It is built on the solid economic theory that while the individual cities and towns of the North are strong, if they are enabled to pool their strengths, they could be stronger

⁵ HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2014](#), 2014, p49

⁶ Conservative Party, [Strong Leadership, A Clear Economic Plan, A Brighter, More Secure Future](#), 2015, p13

than the sum of their parts. It means investing in better transport to connect up the North; backing strengths in science and innovation; investing in culture, housing and the quality of life to make the North a magnet for new businesses and talented people; and devolving powers and budgets and creating powerful new elected mayors who will give people in northern cities and towns a strong voice.⁷

Northern Powerhouse Phase 2

A document entitled “Northern Powerhouse Phase 2” was published alongside the 2016 Budget. This was a joint statement between the “North’s core cities” (Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool and Newcastle). It includes a commitment to “work together across the whole of the North over the coming months to look at what more we can do to tackle key challenges across a number of specific policy areas”.⁸ Joint policy commitments are made in the statement to attracting skilled workers; greater levels of innovation and entrepreneurship, including clusters of high productivity industries; international trade; and increased housing capacity.

Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review for TfN

SQW Consulting published an independent economic review in April 2016, commissioned by Transport for the North (TfN).⁹ It found that:

- the North's economic performance gap is persistent and entrenched, averaging about 25% below the rest of England (10-15% when London is excluded);
- productivity differences account for the majority of the performance gap; and
- the poor productivity performance is explained in terms of workforce skills, technology, investment and connectivity.

The report identified four key ‘capabilities’ for the North’s economy: advanced manufacturing, energy, health innovation, and digital development.

The Business, Innovation and Skills Committee launched an inquiry into the Northern Powerhouse in March 2016. A call for evidence closed in May 2016. The inquiry has since been folded into the Committee's [inquiry on industrial strategy](#).

1.3 Where is the Northern Powerhouse?

There is no authoritative geographical definition of the Northern Powerhouse. Alexandra Jones, chief executive of the Centre for Cities, said in September 2016:

Over time, the Northern Powerhouse project moved away from its initial aims of strengthening the economies of major city regions in order to boost the whole of the North, to instead considering

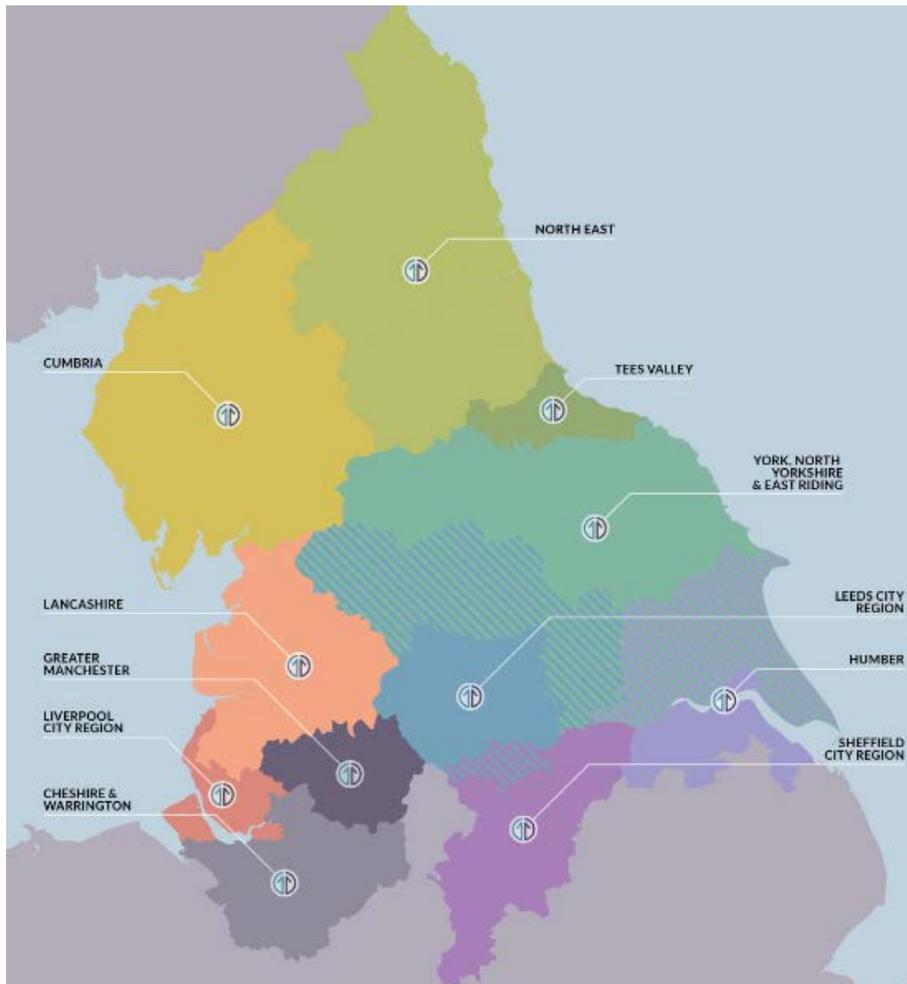
⁷ HMT, [Budget 2016](#), 16 March 2016, para 1.288

⁸ See HM Treasury, [Joint Statement between the North’s core cities and Government: Northern Powerhouse Phase 2](#), March 2016

⁹ SQW, [Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review](#), April 2016

the North as one big region with common economic strengths and challenges.¹⁰

The majority of publications, both from Government and other stakeholders, define the area covered as the three previous 'standard regions' of the North-East, North-West and Yorkshire & Humber.¹¹ Others use this definition for the North, but appear to restrict the definition of the 'Northern Powerhouse' to the city-regions within that area.¹² Transport for the North (TfN) uses the LEP geographies of the North, which also cover some areas on the other side of the Humber:



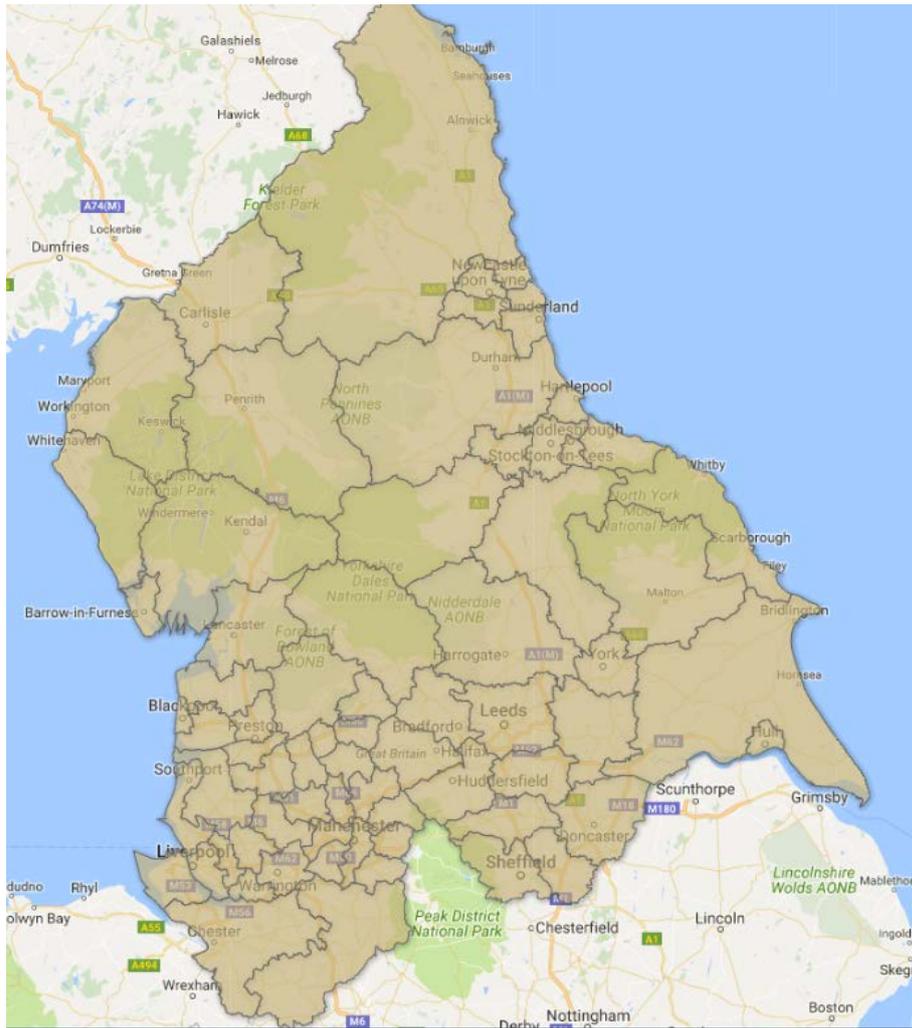
This paper uses the broader definition (see map below):

¹⁰ Alexandra Jones, "[Osborne should use new platform to get Northern Powerhouse back on track](#)", *Centre for Cities*, 20 September 2016

¹¹ See, for instance, SQW, [Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review](#), April 2016; TfN, [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#), March 2016, p2; HM Treasury, [Budget 2015](#), p. 45; HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2015](#), p51. (By contrast, the 2014 Autumn Statement listed the three northern regions separately.)

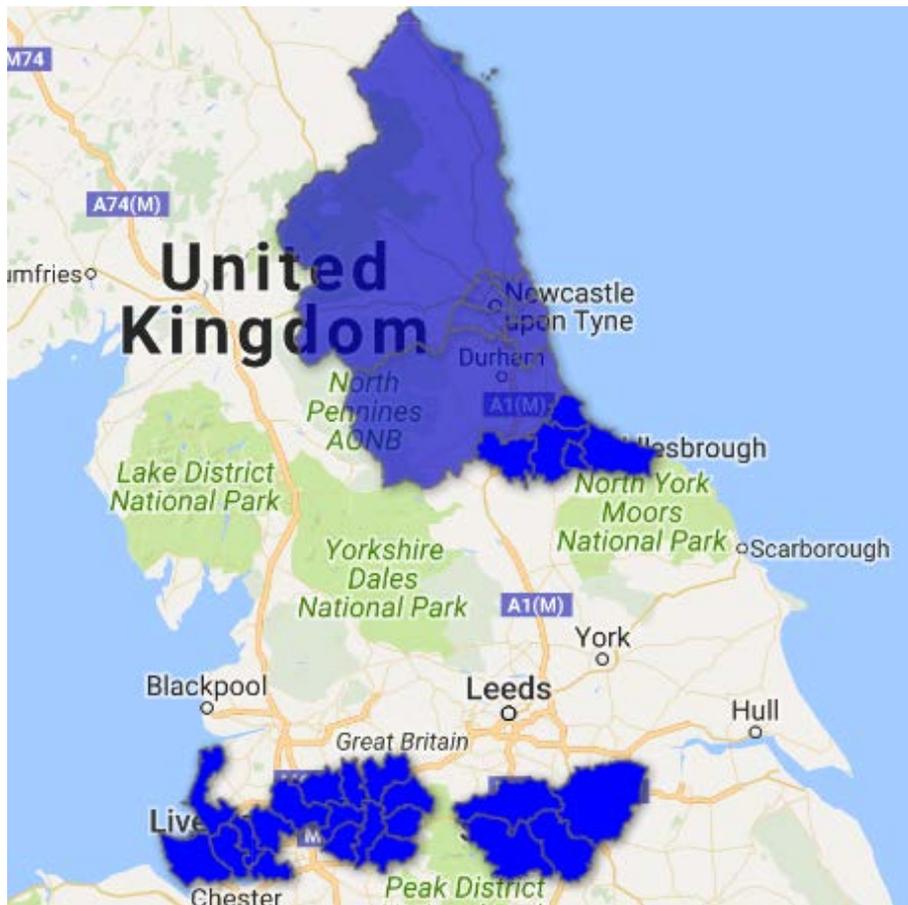
¹² Centre for Cities, [Building the Northern Powerhouse](#), 1 June 2016

Geographical area covered by the Northern Powerhouse



The devolution deal areas included within the Northern Powerhouse are highlighted on the map below. The North East region, in lighter blue, has had the offer of a devolution deal withdrawn, as noted elsewhere.

Devolution deals within the Northern Powerhouse



1.4 Perspectives on the Northern Powerhouse

Business perspectives

IPPR's 2015 report *Rhetoric to Reality: business views on the Northern Powerhouse* identified infrastructure and connectivity; human capital, innovation and business support; and leadership and policy development as the four main means by which growth can be increased in the North.¹³

A stakeholder group called "UK Northern Powerhouse" was established in 2016, with the strapline "Leveraging the assets of the North". It has [established a website](#), held a small number of events, and appointed an advisory group chaired by Lord (Bob) Kerslake, previously Permanent Secretary at DCLG. Its February 2016 report stated:

More than two in five adults in the North of England say they have never heard of the 'Northern Powerhouse' (44%). A further one in five (20%) say they have heard of it, but know nothing about it.

When asked about their confidence in whether the Government's 'Northern Powerhouse' policy will boost the economy in the North, adults in the North of England are split; half say they are confident (50%); while two in five (40%) disagree.

¹³ IPPR, [Rhetoric to reality: business views on the Northern Powerhouse](#), 2015, p6-7

There is strong support for devolution to the North; four in five Northern adults (82%) agree that local politicians in the North, rather than MPs in Westminster, should have control over services like transport and health to improve the region.

We heard many people say that although they thought there were shared values of people who lived in the North of England there was no shared sense of identity, with many stating they felt more commitment to their immediate community or sub region.¹⁴

A 'prospectus' setting out business perspectives was published in March 2016 by Insider Media. The report stressed the importance of transport and skills, and a quicker planning system.¹⁵

Stakeholder perspectives

IPPR's Ed Cox stated in July 2016 that it "must never be seen only as a government programme. Many businesses have bemoaned its lack of definition; this vacuum is its greatest opportunity".¹⁶ Plans and policy recommendations have emerged to fill this perceived gap:

- IPPR and the Royal Town Planning Institute have produced a 'Great North Plan', addressing policy on the economy, transport, population and energy / the environment;¹⁷
- The IPPR produced a report entitled "[The State of the North](#)" in October 2015;
- PwC produced [a note in July 2016](#) on the economic performance of the Northern Powerhouse area and the opportunities and threats arising from leaving the European Union;
- The UK Northern Powerhouse stakeholder group has acknowledged businesses' desire for shared responsibility between Government and business to deliver investment;¹⁸ and
- ResPublica have produced a "Manifesto for the North", advocating faster and more radical devolution of powers over (amongst other matters) health, housing and energy to Northern cities.¹⁹

The IPPR have identified four claims underlying the Northern Powerhouse agenda:

- That the combined 'economic mass' of cities in the north of England can act as a significant 'counterweight' to London, so reducing the nation's dependency on the capital city and rebalancing the economy.
- That economic growth in the North will be predicated on the agglomeration effects generated by the biggest cities – particularly focussed on Manchester – and key economic assets in science, technology and other innovation hubs.

¹⁴ UK Northern Powerhouse, [Building the Northern Powerhouse: next steps for transformation](#), April 2016, p4

¹⁵ Insider Media, [Northern Powerhouse: prospectus from business](#), 2016

¹⁶ Ed Cox, '[The northern powerhouse rolls on, but lacks leadership](#)', IPPR, 29 July 2016

¹⁷ Details of the plan, including a wallchart, can be found [on the IPPR's website](#).

¹⁸ UK Northern Powerhouse, [Building the Northern Powerhouse: next steps for transformation](#), April 2016, p11

¹⁹ ResPublica, [A Manifesto for the North](#), 2015

- That in order to achieve mass and agglomeration there needs to be much better connectivity within and between cities which requires significant investment in transport infrastructure – now being driven forward by a Transport for the North partnership (see DfT et al 2015).
- That economic growth potential is best unlocked by devolution of key powers and funds to city regions formed of combined authorities and local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) under the visible and accountable leadership of directly elected metro-mayors.²⁰

Neil Lee, of the London School of Economics, has suggested that the Northern Powerhouse can be regarded as a 'brand':

The "policy" has some excellent features which lend it to this sort of interpretation: it is a good soundbite; it is vague enough for individuals to interpret in their own way, yet specific enough for them to feel they have understood; it is focused and clear; and it is hard to oppose.If this interpretation is correct, the 'brand' can simply be applied to give existing policies focus and comprehension. New motorways, improvements to rail infrastructure, enterprise zones can all be branded as Northern Powerhouse projects – lending coherence to scattered policy initiatives, and increasing 'brand awareness' at the same time.²¹

Public opinion

A public opinion survey by Ipsos MORI found that half of respondents in the North of England had heard of the Northern Powerhouse.²²

However, only 26% of respondents believed it would happen soon enough to have an impact on their life.

ComRes carried out a poll in November 2015 for the BBC. It reported the findings as follows:

- More than two in five adults in the North of England say they have never heard of the 'Northern Powerhouse' (44%). A further one in five (20%) say they have heard of it, but know nothing about it.
- When asked about their confidence in whether the Government's 'Northern Powerhouse' policy will boost the economy in the North, adults in the North of England are split; half say they are confident (50%); while two in five (40%) disagree.
- There is strong support for devolution to the North; four in five Northern adults (82%) agree that local politicians in the North, rather than MPs in Westminster, should have control over services like transport and health to improve the region.²³

²⁰ Ed Cox and Jack Hunter, *Full steam ahead: business attitudes towards the Northern Powerhouse*, IPPR, 2015, p3

²¹ Neil Lee, "[Powerhouse of Cards? Understanding the Northern Powerhouse](#)", LSE Spatial Economics Research Centre, 2016, p11

²² UK Northern Powerhouse, *Building the Northern Powerhouse: next steps for transformation*, April 2016, p22. Fieldwork was carried out in January 2016.

²³ ComRes Global, [BBC Northern Powerhouse poll](#), 16 November 2015

1.5 Critiques of Northern Powerhouse policies

Underplaying of skills issues

Skills and further education have not occupied a leading role in the rhetoric of the Northern Powerhouse, although some 'devolution deals' agreed with combined authorities include adult skills budgets. The City Growth Commission identified this as an issue in its 2014 report *Unleashing Metro Growth*:

Metros should administer Adult Skills Budgets with reference to evidence-based skills strategies and other advice prepared by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Ultimately, devolution of skills funding should extend to 14-to-19-year-old provision so there are seamless employment and skills pathways for young people.²⁴

The IPPR's 2015 *State of the North* report suggested that skills shortages played a major part in economic outcomes in the North of England:

In general, the North has a lower proportion of higher skilled people than the national average. Across the region, 52.5 per cent of working-age people hold a QCF level 3 qualification or above – less than the national rate of 56.5 per cent. While London's skills profile distorts this figure a little, even when London is excluded the North's labour force still has a lower level of skill than that of the UK as a whole, for which the figure excluding London stands at 55.2 per cent.²⁵

UK Northern Powerhouse's 2016 conference report also noted skills issues in the North, referring to the need to improve all levels of education, particularly apprenticeships, and help graduates on their second or third jobs. Delegates also recommended better commercial relationships with universities.

In its 2016 report *Northern Schools: putting education at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse*, the IPPR argued for a step change to pre-16 education in the North, including raising attainment in secondary schools, bringing spending per pupil up to the national average, and boosting teacher recruitment.²⁶

Role of non-urban areas

As noted above, it is not entirely clear whether the 'Northern Powerhouse' as a term refers to the urban areas participating in devolution deals or to the whole of the North of England.

Alexander Nurse has drawn attention to the complications involved in pursuing a pan-Northern economic policy:

It is important to avoid suggestions that the 'North' is a homogenous mass to which policy can be applied with a broad brush. Its towns and cities face different economic challenges and

²⁴ City Growth Commission, *Unleashing Metro Growth*, 2014, p4: see also their report *Human Capitals: Driving Metro Growth by Investing in the Workforce*.

²⁵ IPPR, *State of the North 2015: Four tests for the northern powerhouse*, 2015, p24-25

²⁶ Jonathan Clifton, Anna Round and Luke Raikes, *Northern Schools: Putting Education at the Heart of the Northern Powerhouse*, May 2016

have different needs... The North is characterised by urban regions that are historic economic competitors which have long been engaged in a zero-sum game of urban 'winners' and 'losers'.... For those cities there are questions over whether they are capable of abandoning such a narrative, or indeed if by emphasising their individual strengths they can collaborate.²⁷

Andrew Percy, on his first visit after being appointed as Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, said:

...our core cities are really important to the Northern Powerhouse but actually whether it is Sunderland, whether it's Beverley, whether it is Manchester all of those communities are equally important. The rural economy is as important, because it employs so many people in the North, as the urban economy.

I don't want to get in to the whole is it Manchester versus Bradford or Bridlington versus Burnley. It isn't about that. We all want the same thing which is development and growth in the North. All elements of it are important.²⁸

²⁷ Alexander Nurse, "Creating the North from the sum of its parts? Research questions to assess the Northern Powerhouse", *Local Economy* 30 (6), 689-701, p693

²⁸ James Reed, "[Northern Powerhouse: All North to share in drive to boost economy](#)", *Yorkshire Post*, 28 July 2016

2. Policy commitments

Northern Powerhouse policy commitments fall into three main categories, all consisting mainly of infrastructure/capital spending: transport, science institutions, and cultural venues. Government commitments in these areas are outlined in this section where they have been specifically associated with the Northern Powerhouse.

A further policy commitment is the devolution of power to sub-regional areas and associated changes in structures of governance. This policy is addressed in section 3 below. It includes some additional infrastructure funding for new 'combined authorities', and some powers over policies associated with economic growth such as adult skills and employment support.

2.1 Transport

One of the key aspects of the Northern Powerhouse agenda is creating better connections between all of the North's economic centres, so that they can function as a single economic unit.²⁹ In addition, the North no longer has the spare transport capacity to accommodate growth; rail journey times are slow and the road network is becoming increasingly congested.³⁰ As such, much Northern Powerhouse policy focuses on transport and, in particular, transport between the main metropolitan areas.

The Chair of Transport for the North (TfN), John Cridland, has likened the region, and the benefits transport can bring to it, to the Randstad in the Netherlands:

"I like to use the example of the Randstad in the Netherlands," he says, referring to that country's "ring city" region, made up by Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague. "In the Randstad you've got a similar population to the cities in the north of England, but greater economic value, and connectivity is part of that. If you've got somebody growing up in somewhere like Salford, the Metro has given them a chance to travel quickly and effectively on a regular basis between Salford Quays and Manchester Piccadilly. What TfN ... is now trying to do is to make it possible for someone from Salford not only to have a high-quality job in Salford or Manchester, but to have a high-quality job in Leeds or Sheffield or Liverpool. And whether it's rail links or road links, it's regular, predictable and high-quality travel options that give people chances."³¹

The Government has said that it is "spending £13bn on transport for the Northern Powerhouse over this Parliament, including dramatic improvements to our roads and railways in the North".³² The detail of this headline figure has proved difficult to nail down, though *The Guardian* reported in July 2015 that:

Transport governance, including the powers and responsibilities of Transport for the North (TfN) are set out in section 3.3, below.

²⁹ TfN, [The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review](#), 24 June 2016, p10

³⁰ Ibid., p23

³¹ "[A tunnel through the Peak District: can you dig it?](#)", *New Statesman Spotlight*, October 2016

³² TfN, [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#), March 2016, p5

- £3bn is for rail schemes – of which £1.35bn had already been allocated, mainly to upgrades in and around Manchester – with the outstanding £1.65bn for rail working out at £330m a year until 2020, for all of the North-East, Yorkshire & Humber and the North-West;
- £5bn is for major road schemes, including the improvements to the A1; and
- the remaining £5bn is made up of the standard allocations to local councils through the Integrated Transport Block Capital Grant for projects such as bus lanes, cycle lanes, and traffic-calming and local highways maintenance, including filling in potholes.³³

The Chancellor announced further spending in the 2015 Spending Review, including a £400 million Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, with contributions from the British Business Bank and the European Investment Bank;³⁴ and a £300m Transport Development Fund which may be used as preparatory funding for Northern Powerhouse major rail and road projects (but is also available to other projects, such as Crossrail 2).³⁵ Funding for local transport projects is also committed through the Growth Fund.³⁶

Significant investment other than that available from central Government will be required to implement Northern Powerhouse policy. The Government already has a number of initiatives to incentivise private investment, including the UK Guarantees Scheme.³⁷

Some have argued that the £13 billion headline figure is nowhere near enough to fund transformative transport provision in the north. For example, Ed Cox of IPPR North called for a figure closer to £50 billion.³⁸

TfN reports that its market testing has demonstrated an appetite among private investors to invest in northern transport projects under certain circumstances.³⁹ Overseas foreign investment has already been a feature in northern transport projects, such as the £800 million investment made by Beijing Construction Engineering Group into Manchester Airport.⁴⁰ However, it may be that attracting investment for northern projects will be more challenging than for schemes such as Crossrail, given that TfN is a relatively new body and its projects span more local authorities.

The Northern Powerhouse spending commitments have been criticised on a number of grounds. First, many of the commitments are in fact for feasibility studies or development of plans rather than actual

³³ "[George Osborne's £13bn 'northern powerhouse' fund includes routine council spending on potholes](#)", *The Guardian*, 5 July 2015

³⁴ British Business Bank, "[Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund](#)" [Accessed 18 August 2016]

³⁵ HM Treasury, *Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015*, para 1.200

³⁶ For further details see HC Library briefing paper [SN07120](#)

³⁷ HM Treasury, *National Infrastructure Plan 2014*, December 2014, p10

³⁸ "[Hammond 'should give North £50bn for transport'](#)", *Yorkshire Post*, 15 September 2016

³⁹ Op cit., *The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report*, p55

⁴⁰ Irwin Mitchell/CEBR, *City Growth Tracker – Spreading economic growth across the UK*, July 2016

construction.⁴¹ Second, the funding available for northern transport is still less than that in the south.⁴² Lastly, the funding has tended to concentrate on metropolitan areas, in particular Manchester, at the expense of other areas in the north.⁴³ In relation to the last criticism, the Prime Minister has recently given indications that she intends to spread funding more evenly across the North.⁴⁴

Rail

The Government and TfN have set out their ambition for a rail network which links the cities of the North and other important economic centres with high quality rail connections, allowing for reduced journey times and increased frequency of service.⁴⁵ Some improvements are already underway. TfN is also currently identifying other areas where it may be necessary to upgrade the existing network or build new infrastructure.⁴⁶ This has been informed by the initial strategic advice provided by the National Infrastructure Commission led by Lord Andrew Adonis, which reported in March 2016.⁴⁷

In October 2013, DfT, Network Rail and ORR agreed a £38.3 billion rail spending programme intended to run from April 2014 to March 2019 across England and Wales. This funding includes the electrification programme in the North and the Northern Hub.⁴⁸

The 2015 Spending Review confirmed a funding envelope of £55.7 billion in 2015 prices for HS2, which will deliver HS2 from London to Birmingham by 2026 (Phase 1), Birmingham to Crewe by 2027 (Phase 2a) and to Leeds and Manchester by 2033 (Phase 2b).⁴⁹

The Budget 2016 gave the 'green light' to Northern Powerhouse Rail (also called HS3) between Leeds and Manchester. However, the committed funding of £60 million was to develop plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail and other connections between the cities of the North rather than actual construction costs.⁵⁰ £4 million has also been provided to support the development of HS2 Growth Strategies for Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Airport and Leeds stations.⁵¹

The Government has said that the award of the Northern and TransPennine Express (TPE) franchises would amount to a £1.2 billion investment in rail services for improved rolling stock and new and more

Maps showing the Network Rail enhancement programme and the Northern Powerhouse rail proposals can be found on pp28&30 of the [Northern Transport Strategy](#)

Information on HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail can be found in HC Library briefing paper SN7082, [High Speed 2 \(HS2\) Phases 2a, 2b and beyond](#)

⁴¹ '[Northern Powerhouse aspirations for transport step up a gear](#)', *Financial Times*, 15 April 2016

⁴² '[Osborne will pledge £300m for road and rail to link-up the North](#)', *The Yorkshire Post*, 15 March 2016

⁴³ '[Manchester wins again in northern transport lottery - at cost to others](#)', *The Guardian*, 15 March 2016

⁴⁴ IPPR North blog, '[The northern powerhouse rolls on, but lacks leadership](#)', 29 July 2016

⁴⁵ DfT press notice, '[Northern transport strategy spring report marks major progress](#)', 7 March 2016

⁴⁶ Op cit., [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#), p29

⁴⁷ National Infrastructure Commission, [High Speed North](#), 16 March 2016

⁴⁸ For further information see HC Library briefing paper [SN5907](#)

⁴⁹ DfT press release, '[Department for Transport's settlement at the Spending Review 2015](#)' 25 November 2015

⁵⁰ HM Treasury, Budget 2016, para 1.292

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, para 1.292

regular services.⁵² A further £150 million funding was provided in the Spending Review 2015 to support the delivery of a “ticketing system that makes it simple and easy for people to travel across the North by bus, tram, metro and rail”.⁵³

Roads

The number, capacity and reliability of roads – and in particular the east-west road connections – are viewed as a constraint on the northern economy. At present, the M62 is the only continuous east-west motorway between Derby and Stoke-on-Trent in the south and Glasgow and Edinburgh in the north. TransPennine travel is a particular issue; the road that connects Greater Manchester and the Sheffield City Region is a single carriageway road through the middle of the Peak District, an area with unpredictable weather. Demand on the roads is also heavy, in part due to freight travel to and from the region’s ports, rail links, distribution centres and airports.⁵⁴

The March 2015 Northern Transport Strategy set out the Government and TfN’s shared vision for roads, including a core free-flow network of motorways and expressways offering reliable ‘mile a minute’ journey times, linked to local networks and key locations including ports, airports and other logistics hubs. This vision included improved east-west major road links and expanded capacity on north-south links.⁵⁵

As indicated above, of the £13 billion normally cited as the overall funding figure for Northern Powerhouse transport, £5 billion can be assigned to the major road network while other local funding may be spent on local road improvements. Specific funding commitments for individual roads in the North include:

- £640 million for the A1 and £170 million for TransPennine roads;⁵⁶
- £75 million for proposals relating to the development of the TransPennine tunnel, enhancing the A66 and/or A69, and improvement of the north-west quadrant of the M60;⁵⁷ and
- £161 million to bring forward by two years upgrade work on the M62.⁵⁸

A map showing the major road improvement programme for 2015-20 can be found on p34 of the [Northern Transport Strategy](#)

⁵² DfT press release, [‘Massive boost to rail services brings Northern Powerhouse to life’](#), 9 December 2015; for further information see sections 9 and 14 of HC Library briefing paper [SN1343](#)

⁵³ HM Treasury, Budget 2016, para. 1.254

⁵⁴ TfN, [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#)

⁵⁵ DfT/TfN, [The Northern Powerhouse: One Agenda, One Economy, One North](#), March 2015, p23

⁵⁶ HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2014](#), para 1.191

⁵⁷ HM Treasury, Budget 2016, para 1.292

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, para 1.292

Road Investment Strategy (RIS)

The strategic road network (SRN), comprising approximately 4,300 miles of motorways and major 'trunk' A-roads in England, is managed by Highways England.

The first 'Road Investment Strategy' (RIS 1) is a multi-year funding settlement to improve England's SRN and represents the continuation of a significant expansion in road building.

Within RIS 1, the Government committed to funding 42 major schemes in the north, including the upgrade of the A1 to continuous motorway standard throughout Yorkshire and to Newcastle, and turning the M1 and M62 to smart motorways to provide continuous four lane standard from Leeds and Sheffield to Manchester and London.

For RIS 2 (2020-25) TfN is hoping to include a new road tunnel under the Pennines between Sheffield and Manchester; upgrading of the east-west A66 and/or A69 to dual carriageway across the Pennines north of the M62; and improvement of Manchester North-West Quadrant on the M60.

The RIS has been subject to criticism. Some commentators argue that building new roads simply serves to generate more traffic, resulting in damage to the environment and no benefits to the economy. Many are also unhappy about the diversion of resources from public transport, making it more difficult to travel without a car.⁵⁹ Those outside of the big city regions also argue that concentrating funding on the major links means smaller towns being left behind.⁶⁰

The TransPennine Tunnel, a subject of much concern for environmental and sustainable transport groups,⁶¹ is described by John Cridland of TfN as a 'mega-project on a par with Crossrail', involving up to 18 miles of subterranean driving: "As a grand project ... it is of that scale. It's a Crossrail of the north. And if you look at what Crossrail is doing to transform London, I think that's the opportunity".⁶²

Public transport and cycling

Use of public transport in the North is currently low. With the exception of the Tees Valley and Hull and Humber, a range of between 11 and 19 per cent of commuters across the city regions use public transport to travel to work, compared to 45% of Londoners.⁶³

Buses

Bus transport outside of London was deregulated by the Conservative Government in the 1980s. As a result, bus operators are entitled to register commercial services, setting fares and determining routes and timetables. Local authorities were given powers to commission socially

⁵⁹ See for instance '[Transport groups fear 'hugely damaging' cuts to local transport](#)', *Financial Times*, 20 August 2015 and, '[Patrick McLoughlin's Commons statement on the £15bn roads investment: Politics Live blog](#)', *The Guardian*, 1 December 2014

⁶⁰ '[Lancashire politicians pour scorn on new motorway proposal to link Yorkshire](#)', *The Yorkshire Post*, 8 April 2016

⁶¹ See, e.g. "[Consider trans-Pennine transport holistically: 18-mile tunnel is madness!](#)", Campaign for Better Transport blog, 15 December 2015

⁶² Op cit., "[A tunnel through the Peak District: can you dig it?](#)"

⁶³ Centre for Cities, [Building the Northern Powerhouse](#), 1 June 2016, p12

necessary services which were not provided by commercial operators. London has a different system of bus franchising which allows TfL to plan routes across the city and set fares, and then contract with operators to deliver these services.⁶⁴ The metropolitan areas outside London have been campaigning for the re-regulation of local bus services, usually by the introduction of franchising arrangements, for thirty years.

Devolution deals for Greater Lincolnshire, Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, North East Combined Authority and Sheffield City Region include bus franchising powers.⁶⁵ These are provided for in the [Bus Services Bill](#), currently going through Parliament, which allows Mayoral Combined Authorities and other local authorities with explicit consent from the Secretary of State for Transport to introduce franchising. In Manchester, development of bus franchising proposals is being undertaken now to allow Transport for Greater Manchester to meet the statutory process in the Bill immediately following the mayoral election in May 2017.⁶⁶ In contrast, Liverpool City Region has just signed a new five-year 'bus alliance' partnership, indicating that franchising is unlikely to be an immediate priority for the region.⁶⁷

Mass transit systems in metropolitan areas

A number of the northern Growth Deals include funding for local transport. For instance, Sheffield's Supertram Renewal will see the accelerated delivery of a rail replacement programme while the Manchester Metrolink will be improved through measures such as passenger help points and real time information screens.⁶⁸

Unlike Manchester, Sheffield and Newcastle, Leeds and Liverpool do not have mass transit systems. In Liverpool, proposals for 'Merseytram', a light rail system, were developed between 2001 and 2008 but were eventually abandoned altogether in 2013.⁶⁹ Leeds has been considering a trolleybus system for 25 years, but saw its plans rejected by the Government in May 2016 after a public planning inspector judged the system to be unsuitable for the area.⁷⁰

Smart ticketing ('Smart North')

Smart North is described by TfN as "the programme to deliver simplified fares, integrated ticketing, and improved online passenger information across all public transport modes in the North".⁷¹ TfN receives funding from the Government to develop Smart North, including proposals for contactless payment by bank card and by mobile phone for pre-pay

⁶⁴ For further information on bus franchising, see Library note [Buses: franchising \(SN00624\)](#), 19 April 2016

⁶⁵ LGA, '[Devolution deals](#)' [Accessed 17 August 2016]

⁶⁶ Greater Manchester Combined Authority, '[Transport Devolution costs and funding](#)', 29 July 2016, para 2.2

⁶⁷ Arriva press notice, "[New era for the Liverpool City Region as Bus Alliance agreement signed](#)", 27 September 2016

⁶⁸ Op cit., '[Expanding Growth Deals](#)' [accessed 16 August 2016];

⁶⁹ Merseytravel, '[Merseytram Statement – October 2013](#)', 25 October 2013 [Accessed 17 August 2016]

⁷⁰ DfT, '[Leeds Trolley Vehicle System Order: decision letter](#)', 12 May 2016

⁷¹ Op cit., '[The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#)', p9

tickets, and emerging technologies around account-based travel.⁷² The proposals will not include a smart card similar to London's Oyster Card, as that technology is considered to be outdated.⁷³

TfN has submitted a Strategic Outline Business Case to Government setting out a three tranche delivery plan over the next 10-15 years. The first tranche focuses on the alignment of regional schemes and the development of smart ticketing on the rail network.⁷⁴ While smart ticketing is generally uncontroversial, the pace of progress in the programme has faced criticism.⁷⁵ Gaining agreement across operators on fares (essential to smart ticketing) may well prove challenging.

Cycle City Ambition grants

The Spending Review 2015 committed over £300 million to cycling investment between 2015-15 and 2020-21, including delivering the £114 million Cycle Ambition City scheme.⁷⁶

The last decade has seen the rise of the 'slow travel' movement,⁷⁷ with calls for greater investment for cyclists and pedestrians.⁷⁸ For instance, the Transport Select Committee report on cycling safety in July 2014 endorsed recommendations by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group and called for £10 per head per year spend on cycling infrastructure.⁷⁹

In August 2013 the Coalition Government announced a new funding scheme for cycling. The Cycle Ambition Cities (CAC) grants were awarded to eight urban areas, including £20 million for Greater Manchester, £18.1 million for West Yorkshire and £5.7 million for Newcastle.⁸⁰ The key features of the CACs are:

- New networks of quiet routes, including Dutch-style segregated cycleways;
- Improved facilities, including better lighting and new cycle parking; and
- Improved cycle links to key services, such as employment and education, as well as better cross-modal connectivity, for example to rail stations.⁸¹

Are local transport and cycling being left behind?

There are concerns that funds that could be better used for transport within cities are being diverted to inter-city connections, ignoring that

⁷² HMT, *Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015*, 25 November 2015, para 1.254; and op cit., *The Northern Transport Strategy: Autumn Report*, p23

⁷³ 'Northern England transport planners reject 'Noyster cards'', *The Guardian*, 8 February 2016

⁷⁴ Greater Manchester Combined Authority report, 'Smart Ticketing', 30 June 2016

⁷⁵ 'Northern Powerhouse critics describe transport revolution a 'sham' over smartcard divide', *Chronicle Live*, 8 February 2016

⁷⁶ Op cit., *Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015*, para 2.88

⁷⁸ For more information on cycling, see *Transport 2015* (CBP-7177), 14 May 2015 and *Key Issues for the 2015 Parliament* (CBP-7189), 19 May 2015

⁷⁹ Transport Committee, *Cycling Safety* (third report of session 2014-15), HC 286, 18 July 2014

⁸⁰ DfT press release, 'Government shifts cycling up a gear', 12 August 2013

⁸¹ DfT, *Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy*, March 2016

point that transport can help connect the different parts of a city (academic, commercial, legal, industrial, etc.) and generate economic growth.⁸² For instance, the Campaign for Better Transport criticised the 2015 Spending Review on the basis that funding was safeguarded for large projects such as roads, while everyday services which are under pressure, such as bus services, are neglected.⁸³

Others have argued that the focus on inter-city links is a threat to the success of the Northern Powerhouse. The underlying rationale for major rail and road projects is that better inter-city links can help northern cities operate as one economic unit and labour market. However, the Centre for Cities argues that the examples of Randstad in the Netherlands and Rhine-Ruhr in Germany (often used as models for the Northern Powerhouse) show that people do not travel like this even when faster transport is available. Instead, the success of these regions lies in the ability of its each of its cities to attract business investment.⁸⁴

International connectivity

Northern regional airports are located in Blackpool, Carlisle Lake District, Doncaster-Sheffield, Durham Tees Valley, Humberside, Liverpool, Leeds-Bradford, Manchester and Newcastle.⁸⁵ Regional airports are privatised or part-privatised, although there is a 'public interest stake' in many.

TfN and the Government's shared vision for air connectivity includes:

- more destinations served by Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds-Bradford, Newcastle, Durham-Tees Valley, Doncaster, Sheffield and Humberside, carrying over 30 million passengers a year;
- direct links for businesses and the public to a range of destinations;
- high quality surface access to airports to ensure the North is a competitive location for multi-national businesses;
- better rail connectivity to Manchester Airport; and
- support to Newcastle Airport to allow it to thrive.

This would be achieved by developing plans to better connect Manchester Airport to neighbouring cities by rail; improving connectivity more generally; and reviewing how regional airports would be affected by devolution of Air Passenger Duty to Scotland.⁸⁶

In addition, TfN's Chair John Cridland is chairing a Commission on the International Connectivity of the North with a panel appointed from leading business and industry representatives. The Commission will

⁸² 'Five issues that will shape the Northern Powerhouse', *BBC News*, 22 February 2016

⁸³ Campaign for Better Transport press release, '[Spending Review heralds the triumph of 'grands projects' over everyday transport](#)', 26 November 2015 [Accessed 17 August 2016]

⁸⁴ Centre for Cities, *Building the Northern Powerhouse*, p12

⁸⁵ For further information on regional airports see [Regional Airports](#) (SN00323), 26 April 2016

⁸⁶ Op cit., [The Northern Powerhouse: One Agenda, One Economy, One North](#), p20

consider how the North's access to the global economy through its airports and ports can be improved.⁸⁷

UK ports are largely privately owned; they generally fund their own investment and development plans and make decisions as to whether to provide 'port services' on a commercial basis.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, Government and local authorities are active in improving port surface access and connectivity and encouraging economic development in the areas around ports. For instance, the Government is making road and rail improvements at the Port of Liverpool, while Liverpool City Region is developing a freight and logistics hub in the port through its Growth Fund.⁸⁹

Among the options being considered by TfN for the expansion of ports are:

- development of a rail and water-connected distribution network;
- investment in the port and hinterland connections and infrastructure;
- the utilisation of capacity released on the rail network by HS2 and HS3 for freight services; and
- a package of infrastructure solutions that would facilitate new Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges in the North and would allow larger and longer freight trains to access these interchanges, including gauge clearance where necessary.

In September 2016 the North of England's four main ports (Liverpool (run by Peel Ports), Hull (ABP), Tees Valley (PD) and Tyne (Port of Tyne)) agreed a new partnership to create jobs, boost exports and prosperity across the North of England.⁹⁰ A new Northern Ports Association is aimed at uniting northern ports and make importing and exporting easier.⁹¹

2.2 Culture

In his 2014 speech on the Northern Powerhouse George Osborne said that the North has "world-class arts and culture, from Opera North in Leeds to the Tate in Liverpool, to Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and the new Hepworth over in Wakefield. And then there's the music of the Halle and the Liverpool Philharmonic and of course the best pop music on the planet". He announced his intention to build on this to create "creative, cultural and beautiful places".⁹² This has been underpinned with a

⁸⁷ Op cit., [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#), p45

⁸⁸ For more information on the operation of UK ports, see [Market access to port services and financial transparency of ports](#) (CBP-7457), 11 January 2016

⁸⁹ DfT press release, '[Transport Minister views plans to boost Port of Liverpool](#)', 16 May 2016 and op cit., [The Northern Transport Strategy: Autumn Report](#), p25

⁹⁰ Peel Ports press notice, "[Northern ports form powerhouse partnership](#)", 13 September 2016

⁹¹ This was a recommendation in IPPR North's Northern Ports report, see: IPPR North, [Gateways to the northern powerhouse: A northern ports strategy](#), 29 June 2016

⁹² Rt Hon George Osborne MP, [Chancellor: 'We need a Northern powerhouse'](#), 23 June 2014

variety of policy commitments made in subsequent Autumn Statements and Budgets.

Great Exhibition of the North

In the 2014 Autumn Statement, northern towns and cities were invited to bid to put on a two-month exhibition, celebrating the best of art, culture and design. Government guidance published in April 2016 stated that:

... the winning venue will create and implement an exhibition that celebrates great art, culture and design of the North of England, showcasing local artists and performers, cultural organisations and creative businesses, promoting innovative and entrepreneurial activity, and highlighting research conducted by universities in the region.⁹³

On 11 October the Government announced that Newcastle and Gateshead will host the Great Exhibition of the North. The Exhibition is due to open in July 2018.⁹⁴

The Government announced that it would contribute £5 million towards the exhibition itself and a further £15 million into a legacy fund to attract further cultural investment in the Northern Powerhouse.⁹⁵

New theatres and exhibition centres

In 2014 the Government committed to providing £78 million towards Manchester City council's proposal for a new theatre and exhibition space, called The Factory Manchester. This is to be built on the former site of Granada TV studios, and is due to open in 2019. A further £5 million was committed to support Manchester Museum to create a new South Asia Gallery, in partnership with the British Museum.⁹⁶

In the 2016 Budget the Government committed £13 million to the Hull UK City of Culture 2017, including the refurbishment of Hull New Theatre.

In the 2016 Budget the Government also said that it would make available funding to support the Shakespeare North project to establish a new Jacobean-style theatre in Knowsley, subject to business case approval and planning permission being granted.⁹⁷ Planning permission for Shakespeare North was granted in April 2016. The theatre will be built to designs drawn in 1629 by Inigo Jones. A spokesperson for Knowsley council said the project was expected to contribute £10 million to the local economy, and create 210 construction jobs as well as 57 full-time jobs once the theatre opens.⁹⁸

⁹³ DCMS, [Great Exhibition of the North Guidance](#), 2014, p.2

⁹⁴ See DCMS, "[Newcastle-Gateshead chosen to host Great Exhibition of the North](#)", 11 October 2016

⁹⁵ DCMS, [Competition opens to host Great Exhibition of the North](#), 4 April 2016

⁹⁶ University of , [Manchester Museum £5m for permanent South Asia Gallery](#), 2 December 2015

⁹⁷ HM Treasury, [2016 Budget](#), 2016, para 1.303

⁹⁸ Frances Perraudin, "[Shakespeare North theatre plans given go-ahead](#)", *Guardian*, 22 April 2015

Arts projects

In its 2014 Autumn Statement the Government committed to providing £3 million towards arts projects, focussed on northern cities including Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Newcastle, to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

The 2016 Budget also provided £1 million support to S1 Artspace in Sheffield, to create an arts complex subject to planning permission being granted. This is a £20 million capital project expected to open in 2020.⁹⁹

Sport and tourism

The 2016 Budget provided £500,000 to Welcome To Yorkshire for an international marketing campaign for the Tour de Yorkshire, which was held in April 2016 and followed a route from Beverley to Settle.

The Government also supports plans to bid to host the Rugby League World Cup in the Northern Powerhouse in 2021.¹⁰⁰

2.3 Science and innovation

In his initial Speech on the Northern Powerhouse, George Osborne called on northern universities to “come up with radical, transformative long term ideas for doing even more outstanding science in the north”, pledging that the government would back such ideas.¹⁰¹ There are 27 universities in total in the Northern Powerhouse area. However, retaining graduates has long been a problem for the North. Over a third of graduates from major universities leave the North East (37%) and North West (36%) while as many as 55% leave Yorkshire & Humber.¹⁰² KPMG analysed the movements of young workers from the North of England and concluded that failure to attract and retain skilled staff posed a threat to the success of the Northern Powerhouse.¹⁰³

In the 2014 Autumn Statement the Government set out a package of measures to encourage science and innovation in the Northern Powerhouse area, including:

- £235 million in a new Sir Henry Royce Institute for advanced materials research and innovation, which will be based in Manchester and have satellites in cities including Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield;
- a new £20 million Innovation Hub for Ageing Science, in Newcastle, and a new £113 million Cognitive Computing Research Centre in Daresbury, Warrington;

⁹⁹ [S1 Artspace press release](#), 22 March 2016

¹⁰⁰ [PQ 35218 2015-16](#), 4 May 2016

¹⁰¹ Rt Hon George Osborne MP, [Chancellor: 'We need a Northern powerhouse'](#), 23 June 2014

¹⁰² Eddie Copeland and Cameron Scott, [Silicon Cities: Supporting the development of tech clusters outside London and the South East of England](#), Policy Exchange, 2014, p. 42

¹⁰³ Andrew Bounds and Chris Tighe, [“Northern Powerhouse project threatened by ‘brain drain’”](#), *Financial Times*, 18 April 2016

- an unspecified share in up to £60 million for the National Nuclear User Facility;
- £750,000 development funding, matched by industry and education providers, for the new National College for Onshore Oil and Gas in Blackpool;
- £31 million into Energy Security and an Innovation Observing System, consisting of two sub-surface test centres, one of which will be at the former Shell site in Thornton, Lancashire; and
- £28 million for a new high value manufacturing catapult centre in Sedgefield, to drive manufacturing-based growth.¹⁰⁴

The 2015 Spending Review pledged further investment to back science-based and innovative companies in the North. Specifically:

- providing £250 million for small modular reactor development and wider nuclear R&D, creating opportunities for the North's centres of nuclear excellence in Sheffield City Region, Greater Manchester and Cumbria, as well as the nuclear research base across the UK. This builds on £25 million of UK funding for a Joint Research and Innovation Centre with China, to be based in the North West. This is on top of a total of more than £375 million over the 2015-20 Parliament for dedicated science and innovation facilities in the North;
- backing the controversial development of shale gas by placing up to 10% of shale tax revenues into a Shale Wealth Fund. This is projected to invest up to £1 billion in the North and other shale producing areas over the next 25 years;
- providing £50 million for two new agricultural technology centres, headquartered in York, to support innovation and skills in the food and farming supply chain, enabling the UK to grow its share of the global agri-tech market; and
- providing an initial investment of £4 million to establish an Anti-Microbial Resistance Centre of Excellence in R&D at Alderley Park, subject to a business case.¹⁰⁵

The 2016 Budget built on these pledges by further committing the Government to:

- invest £15 million in the National Institute for Smart Data Innovation in Newcastle, subject to the approval of a business case;
- allocate at least £30 million for a '21st century nuclear manufacturing programme'; and
- consult on the priorities and delivery models for the Shale Wealth Fund and how it can be deployed in local communities and the North as a whole.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2014](#), paras 1.195–1.198

¹⁰⁵ HM Treasury, [2015 Spending Review](#), 2015, para 1.255

¹⁰⁶ HM Treasury, [Budget 2016](#), p75

2.4 Additional policies

The bulk of funding attributable to the Northern Powerhouse relates to transport, with smaller quantities going to science and culture (see above). This section identifies other sources of funding attributable to the Northern Powerhouse.

Investment funds totalling £135 million per year will be made available to devolved areas in the Northern Powerhouse area.¹⁰⁷ Plans are being developed in some areas to borrow funds for infrastructure against these investment funds. In addition, Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region will be piloting 100% business rates retention.¹⁰⁸

In the 2014 Autumn Statement the Government committed up to £40 million nationwide to extend the SME voucher scheme to improve digital connectivity up to March 2016.¹⁰⁹ In the event the scheme closed in October 2015. An analysis can be found on the [‘Connection Vouchers’ website](#).

The 2015 Spending Review announced that the Government had agreed with the British Business Bank and LEPs in the North West, Yorkshire & Humber and Tees Valley to create a [‘Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund’](#) of over £400 million to invest in smaller businesses, subject to European funding arrangements. This fund is linked to the European Investment Bank and EU regional development funding, so its future after the UK exits the European Union is not yet clear.

The 2016 Budget announced that the Government would invest £20 million a year of new funding in a Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy to tackle the performance gap between schools in the North and the rest of the country.¹¹⁰ It also announced that £150 million would be invested in flood defence schemes in Leeds, Cumbria, Calder Valley and York, which will better protect 7,400 properties. This formed part of a £700 million national scheme: thus it may not have constituted new spending.

¹⁰⁷ This includes £30 million which formed part of the North-East deal. At the time of writing, local authorities in the North-East have rejected the deal, so it is unclear whether that sum of money will remain available in any form.

¹⁰⁸ HM Treasury, [Budget 2016](#), p.70

¹⁰⁹ HM Treasury, [Autumn Statement 2014](#), para 1.193

¹¹⁰ HM Treasury, [Budget 2016](#), p.74

3. Governance changes

The Northern Powerhouse initiative has driven a number of distinct changes in governance, at different geographical levels and within different institutions. Some have suggested that 'the North' lacks clear leadership, divided between sub-regional combined authority areas and the pan-regional approach of Transport for the North.¹¹¹

3.1 Central government roles

Ministerial responsibility

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) includes a 'Minister for the Northern Powerhouse'. James Wharton MP held the post from the formation of the Conservative government in May 2015. He was succeeded by Andrew Percy MP on 17 July 2016.

Neil O'Brien, a former special adviser on devolution to George Osborne, leads the Number 10 policy unit on industrial strategy. Lord (Jim) O'Neill of Gatley resigned as Commercial Secretary for the Treasury on 23 September 2016. He had previously indicated that he would leave the Government if he perceived that the Northern Powerhouse agenda was no longer being treated seriously, but he gave no indication in his resignation statement that this was the case.¹¹²

Economic and Industrial Cabinet Committee

Under the new Prime Minister, Theresa May, a new cabinet committee was formed that will "focus on delivering an economy that works for everyone". The committee is chaired by the Prime Minister and is made up of Secretaries of State from 11 Government departments. It has three high level objectives:

- To help to drive forward an industrial strategy that will aim to put the United Kingdom in a strong position for the future;
- To promote a diversity of industrial sectors; and
- To ensure the benefits of growth are shared across cities and regions up and down the country.¹¹³

The third objective may hint at a dilution of plans to specifically target the North of England (see section 5 below).

3.2 Devolution and local governance

The governance changes driven by the devolution agenda are a further dimension of the Northern Powerhouse. Mayoral combined authorities will handle some matters related to the Northern Powerhouse, such as adult skills, employment support, and infrastructure investment.

¹¹¹ For instance, see Ed Cox, "[The northern powerhouse rolls on, but lacks leadership](#)", IPPR, 29 July 2016

¹¹² Andrew Bounds, "[Northern powerhouse plans must continue, says Jim O'Neill](#)", Financial Times, 4 Jul 2016

¹¹³ 10 Downing Street, "[New Cabinet committee to tackle top government economic priority](#)", 2 August 2016

At the time of writing devolution deals have been agreed with twelve areas in total, six of which are within the Northern Powerhouse area: Greater Manchester; Liverpool; Sheffield; West Yorkshire; Tees Valley; and the North-East. North-East local leaders subsequently pulled out of their devolution deal on 7 September 2016.

Though each devolution deal has been agreed on a bespoke basis, many common policy areas are covered:

- Restructuring the further education system and devolution of the Adult Skills budget;
- Business support services, working with UK Trade & Investment;
- Additions to the Work and Health Programme, aimed at 'harder-to-help' benefit claimants;
- Fiscal powers, including council tax precepting, business rate supplements, an investment fund, and EU structural funds (commitment of these funds in advance of the UK exiting the EU will be guaranteed by the Government)¹¹⁴;
- Integrated transport systems, including bus franchising, smart ticketing, and improved joint working with Highways England and Network Rail;
- Planning and land use; powers to create spatial plans, Mayoral Development Corporations, to use Compulsory Purchase Orders, and to create joint asset boards for public sector land.

It is not clear how these new models of local governance will align with the Northern Powerhouse. In most devolved areas, an elected mayor will be created, who will appoint a 'cabinet' from the leaders of the member local authorities. The mayor and cabinet will be held to account by a scrutiny committee made up of back-bench councillors from the member local authorities. In Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and the North-East, scrutiny committees are already in place, working to annual plans and regularly reviewing the work of the combined authority.

Twice in recent years the Public Accounts Committee has raised concerns over how accountability and scrutiny of devolved activity would work:

The specific powers devolved as a result of devolution deals...will require more effective local accountability arrangements to be put in place [...]

With greater devolution of the delivery of public services, the ability of Members of Parliament to scrutinise that delivery could be considerably reduced. We were concerned that the impact that these changes will have on parliamentary scrutiny, and how financial accountability will operate, has not been sufficiently considered or discussed with us or elsewhere in Parliament.¹¹⁵

Moreover, combined authority scrutiny committees do not have any role with regard to broader geographical structures such as Transport for the

More information on devolution deals can be found in the Library briefing paper [Devolution to local government in England](#).

¹¹⁴ See [House of Commons PQ49406 2016-17](#)

¹¹⁵ House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, [Cities and local growth](#), HC-296, 2016-17, p. 14

North, or with regard to the Government's capital investments set out in earlier sections.

Jacqui McKinlay, Chief Executive of the Centre for Public Scrutiny, has said that the Committee "must accept devolution of scrutiny is part of the package. Parliament will need to share accountability with local structures, rather than being the primary focus".¹¹⁶

3.3 Transport

As elsewhere in England, transport in the North is governed by a number of different local and national public bodies. For instance, local transport authorities have responsibilities for public transport and parts of the road network, while bodies including Network Rail and Highways England have responsibilities for infrastructure nationally.

However, as part of the Northern Powerhouse strategy, particular governance arrangements have developed to allow for strategic regional input. The most significant of these new bodies is Transport for the North. At present, there is considerable overlap between the different bodies with transport responsibilities; in many cases this is complicated further by the fact that those responsibilities are continuing to evolve.

Transport for the North

In March and October 2014, Sir David Higgins published two reports on HS2 that he had been asked to prepare by the then Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin.¹¹⁷ In addition to route and development proposals, Sir David recommended that the co-operation between local authorities and other key local partners should be formalised in a new body.¹¹⁸

In October 2014 the Secretary of State announced he was accepting Sir David's recommendation and creating a new body called Transport for the North.¹¹⁹ TfN's vision is to:

...bring together all the relevant parties to work in genuine partnership to establish a clear, long term, strategic transport vision for the North of England that is shared by all parties and allows the North to speak with a single voice and execute that vision.¹²⁰

In the 2015 Budget, the then Chancellor, George Osborne, announced that legislation would be introduced to establish TfN as a statutory body.¹²¹ Section 21 of the [Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016](#) provides for the establishment of sub-national transport bodies (STBs) to advise on strategic transport decisions and priorities for the

¹¹⁶ Ed Hammond, [Devolving accountability: a riposte to the Public Accounts Committee](#), Centre for Public Scrutiny, 4 May 2016

¹¹⁷ Op cit., [HS2 Plus: A report by David Higgins](#) and HS2 Ltd., [Rebalancing Britain: from HS2 towards a national transport strategy](#), October 2014

¹¹⁸ Op cit., [Rebalancing Britain: from HS2 towards a national transport strategy](#), p37

¹¹⁹ [HC Deb 27 October 2014, c.8WS](#)

¹²⁰ Op cit., [The Northern Powerhouse: One Agenda. One Economy. One North](#), p39

¹²¹ HMT, [Summer Budget 2015](#), 8 July 2015, para 1.301

local area. TfN is now progressing towards becoming the first STB by early 2017.¹²²

The TfN Partnership Board includes representatives from Northern combined authorities, local transport authorities and LEAs. DfT, Highways England, HS2 and Network Rail are also represented.¹²³

TfN's powers have been devolved from central government rather than drawn upward from local government. Its stated aim is to work on the principle of 'subsidiarity': local responsibilities should be exercised at a local level, with TfN taking responsibility for matters which would otherwise be decided by central government and facilitating co-operation between different bodies within the north.¹²⁴ TfN is proposing to jointly exercise a number of the responsibilities previously solely held by the Secretary of State for Transport when it becomes an STB, for instance setting and varying the Road Investment Strategy and determining certain Network Rail activities.¹²⁵

TfN has also been active in developing relationships with bodies outside of the north, signing Memoranda of Understanding with the Scottish and Welsh Governments.¹²⁶

As well as announcing that TfN would be established as a statutory body, the 2015 Budget provided £30 million in funding over three years to support TfN's running costs and work programme.¹²⁷ This was later increased to a total of £50 million.¹²⁸

TfN is currently developing an integrated, multi-modal Strategic Transport Plan which, building on the March 2015 Northern Transport Strategy, will set the integrated plan and long-term sequenced, investment priorities for TfN as an STB. Local evidence, as well as the findings of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (see section 1.2 above), are being used as the backbone to inform the Strategic Transport Plan and achieve transformational growth by 2050.

Other bodies with responsibility for transport

As well as TfN, there are a number of other bodies that have specific responsibility for transport in the north. This is in addition to central government bodies, including DfT, Network Rail and Highways England. At present, there is considerable overlap between the different bodies. In many cases, this is complicated further by the fact that their responsibilities continue to evolve:

- **Local transport authorities** have a wide range of statutory responsibilities for transport, such as developing local transport plans, commissioning local services and maintaining infrastructure. Funding for local transport comes mainly from locally raised funds

¹²² Op cit., [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#), p10

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Op cit., [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#), p54

¹²⁵ Greater Manchester Combined Authority, ['Transport for the North: report of Councillor Richard Leese, Porfolio Lead of Transport for the North'](#), 29 July 2016

¹²⁶ Op cit., [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#), p10

¹²⁷ Op cit., [Summer Budget 2015](#), para 1.301

¹²⁸ Op cit., [Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015](#), para 1.254

such as council tax, formula funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government, or provision from the DfT;¹²⁹

- **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)** are responsible for bidding for Growth Deal funding, much of which has been used on funding for local roads, and in some metropolitan areas, mass transit systems; they are a conduit for private sector involvement in the development of Northern Powerhouse policy, sitting on the TfN Partnership Board and involved in the Commission on the International Connectivity of the North;
- **Rail North** was established to bring together the 29 local transport authorities in the north. Its objectives are to represent the regional and local economic and strategic objectives for the rail industry and to allow local transport authorities to develop their understanding of rail industry processes. Most notably, it has worked in partnership with DfT on the letting of the Northern and TPE franchises and will be involved with their management.¹³⁰ Rail North has also developed a Long Term Rail Strategy with objectives and targets for the development of rail in the North over the next 20 years. Moving forward, there is a strong case for Rail North to be included within the new statutory arrangements for TfN;¹³¹ and
- **HS2 Ltd.** is a company wholly owned by the Secretary of State for Transport. Its responsibilities include developing sustainable proposals for the HS2 route and working with the DfT to secure the necessary Parliamentary approvals and powers to undertake the development, construction and operation of the railway. Local transport authorities and TfN are responsible for developing plans for regeneration and improved connectivity in their areas in relation to HS2.¹³²

¹²⁹ Op cit., [Funding for local transport: an overview](#), p5

¹³⁰ Rail North/DfT, [Partnership Agreement](#), 20 March 2015

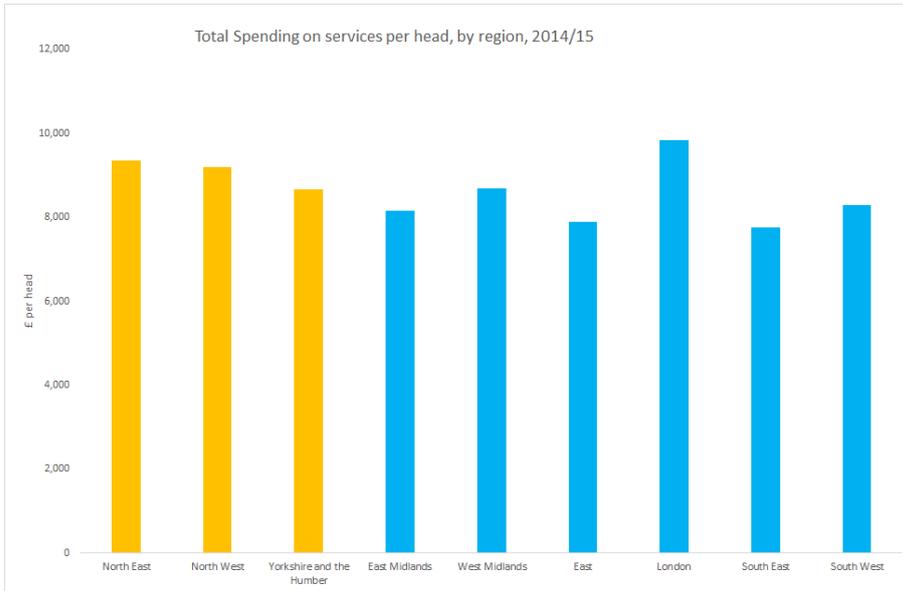
¹³¹ Op cit., [The Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016 Report](#), p55

¹³² HS2 Ltd., [Annual Report and Accounts 2015/16](#), July 2016, p15

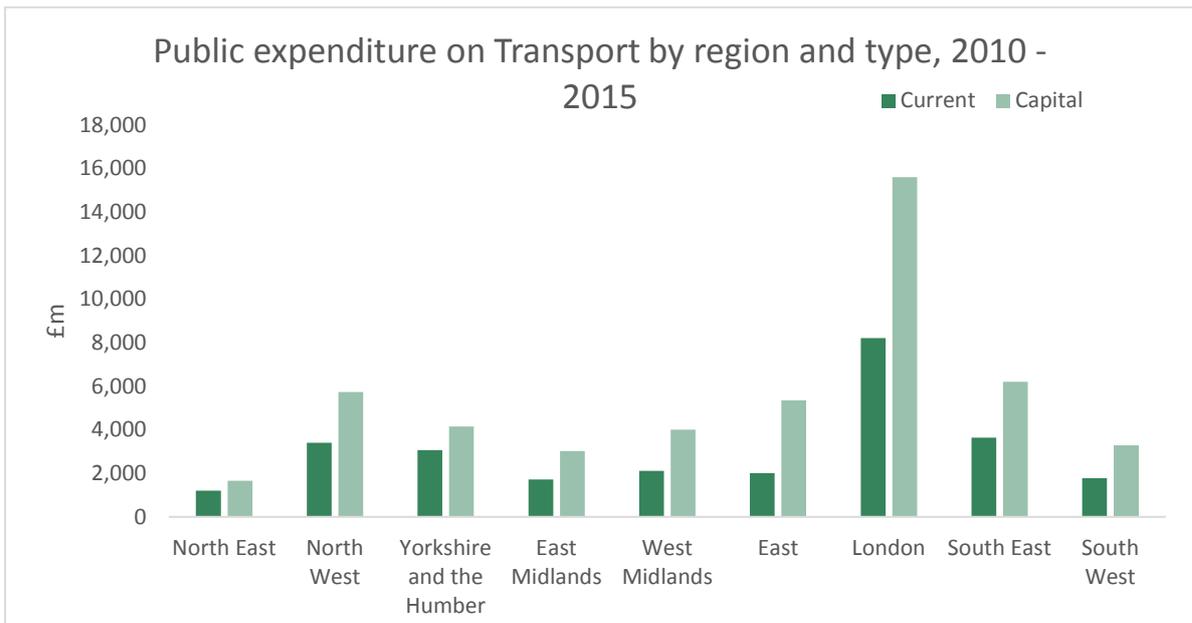
4. Funding and outcomes

4.1 The broad picture

Overall, identifiable public expenditure per capita in 2014/15 was somewhat higher in the three Northern regions than in any other area of England (with the exception of London).¹³³



Considering transport specifically, London receives far more targeted spending than any other region of England, both in terms of capital investment and ongoing operational expenditure. Over the past five years, the North East has ranked lowest in terms of the amount spent on transport.¹³⁴

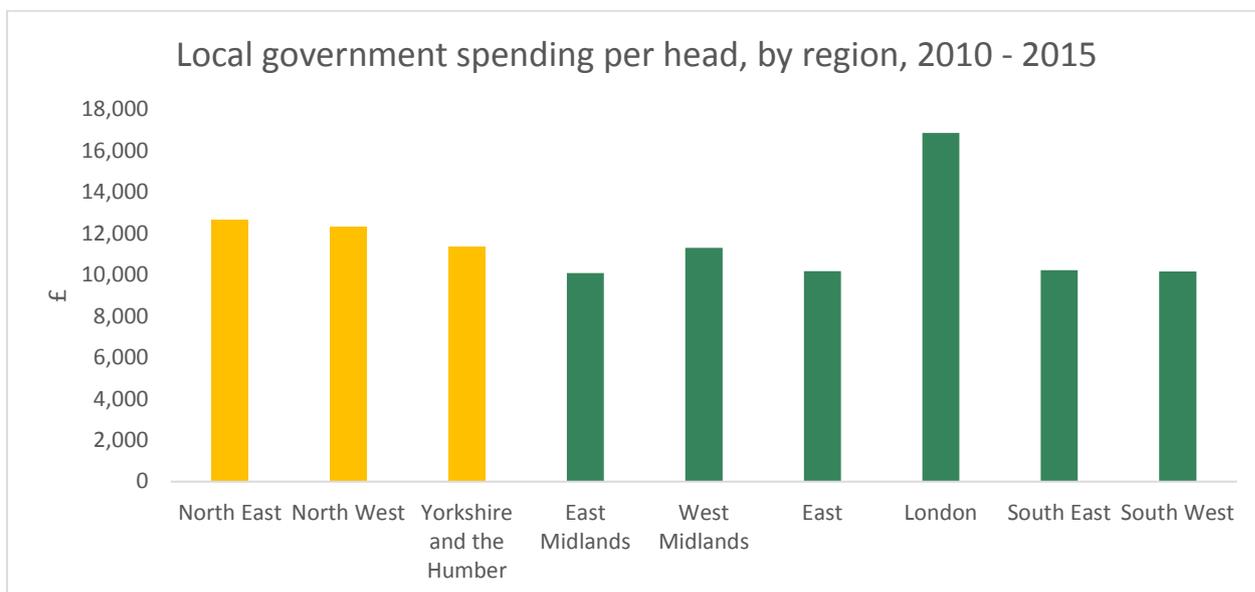


Spending by local government tends to follow a similar pattern to overall government spending – the Northern regions have lower

¹³³ HM Treasury; [Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis 2016](#), Table 9.2

¹³⁴ Ibid, Table 9.8e

spending per capita than London over the past five years, but rank highly compared with other English regions outside the capital:



However, it is also worth noting that part of the case for the Northern Powerhouse is that those parts of the country which might have traditionally been under-funded could work together to pool budgets, giving them more spending power. Any future debate comparing London's expenditure with the 'Northern Powerhouse' regions combined could well raise interesting questions about resource sharing across the North.

4.2 Funding commitments

Funding commitments for the Northern Powerhouse have been made in a number of Government publications. Occasionally, the Government has quoted a headline figure for spending on the Northern Powerhouse. For instance, in the 2014 Autumn Statement HM Treasury stated that the Government would invest over £7 billion in the Northern Powerhouse.¹³⁵ The vast majority of this funding is for transport, totalling around £6 billion.¹³⁶ However, it is difficult to identify the contents of the £7 billion figure, or whether subsequent funding commitments are additional to it. Analysis of the financing of the Northern Powerhouse is challenging generally, for the following reasons:

- Published figures given are difficult to compare with one another, as they cover different periods of time; relate to projects which start in different financial years; and the division between capital and revenue funding is rarely clear. [A timeline published in the 2016 Budget](#) exemplifies these difficulties;
- Some of the funding may be 'rebadged' - that is, it is hard to show that it would not have been spent anyway, if the Northern Powerhouse initiative did not exist. In the same vein, it is not

¹³⁵ [HM Treasury Autumn Statement 2014](#), para 1.188

¹³⁶ The issue of transport funding is discussed in more detail in section 2.1 above

always clear whether a particular project is part of the Northern Powerhouse or not;

- Some funding forms part of national spending programmes, and thus is not easy to disaggregate geographically;
- Few comparisons have been drawn with historical levels of funding in the North, or with historical and current levels of funding in the remainder of England. In any case, as much of the Northern Powerhouse's spending is project-based and discretionary, drawing lessons from such comparisons could be misleading.

4.3 How will success be measured?

The Government has not set out specific objectives or metrics for the Northern Powerhouse.

IPPR's report, *The State of the North 2015*, recommended four tests alongside 11 benchmarks against which success could be measured.¹³⁷

IPPR North on measuring the success of the Northern Powerhouse

Test 1: Prosperity for all

- Halve the productivity gap between the North and the UK as a whole.
- Reach an employment rate of 75%¹³⁸ and halve the gap with the national 'full employment' rate.
- Reduce the proportion of people on low pay in the North to at least the national average.

Test 2: From early years to higher skills

- Catch up with the national rate of early years attainment for under-5s.
- Close the gap in GCSE attainment in terms of the number of pupils achieving five or more GCSE including English and maths.
- Meet the projected demand from employers for skilled workers qualified to GCF level 3 and above.

Test 3: Investing in the future

- Investment in research and development increase from 1% of GDP to 1.3% of GDP.
- Levels of commuter travel between the major cities of the North of England should reach levels seen in similar metro-regions in European regions.

Test 4: Tackling the democratic deficit

- The proportion of people who feel that the balance of power between central and local government is 'about right' should increase to at least the national average in every northern region.
- Levels of public influence and efficacy in the northern regions, particularly at the local level, should rise above the national average, such that more than a third of people feel that they have a real say over what their local authority does.
- At least half of the electorate should exercise their right to vote in mayoral elections in northern cities.

¹³⁷ IPPR, [State of the North 2015: Four tests for the northern powerhouse](#), 2015

¹³⁸ At the time the IPPR report was published, the north's working age unemployment rate was 70.5%, compared to 72.9% nationally.

In 2015 the Centre for Cities published a [Northern Powerhouse factsheet](#), which set out a number of key indicators for the Northern Powerhouse area.¹³⁹ These indicators could be seen as a benchmark against which future performance is measured. These indicators are:

UK population (%):	16.7
Share of GB jobs (%):	16
Share of total UK GVA (%):	13.3
Share of jobs that are knowledge-intensive (%):	12.7
Number of universities:	23 ¹⁴⁰

4.4 Outcomes

A press release on 27 July 2016 listed the following achievements of the Northern Powerhouse:

- five historic devolution deals have been agreed across the Northern Powerhouse – in Sheffield, Greater Manchester, North-East, Tees Valley and Liverpool
- 55% of the population of the Northern Powerhouse will vote in an elected Mayor next year, giving each area a powerful new voice in national life
- major investment in transport has been committed including a new rail franchise on the Northern network delivering 2,000 extra services each week, £200 million for Transport for the North and a £60 million package for exploring work on HS3
- attracting foreign investment – there has been 127% growth in the number of foreign direct investment projects in the Northern Powerhouse over the last two years with the North-West outperforming every other region in the UK
- the employment rate in the Northern Powerhouse is close to its record high, and since June 2014 unemployment has fallen faster in the North than in the South.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ The Centre for Cities define the Northern Powerhouse as Liverpool City Region Combined Authority; Greater Manchester Combined Authority; West Yorkshire Combined Authority; Sheffield Combined Authority; Humber Local Enterprise Partnership; North East Combined Authority

¹⁴⁰ Note: there are 23 universities in the city-region areas of the Northern Powerhouse.

¹⁴¹ HM Treasury, [Northern Powerhouse minister begins first tour since appointment](#), 27 July 2016. This press release does not mention the devolution deal in West Yorkshire, which is considerably weaker than the five devolution deals mentioned here.

5. The future

The Northern Powerhouse agenda was closely personally associated with the former Chancellor, George Osborne. Since Theresa May's government took office, there has been speculation over the Government's commitment to the Northern Powerhouse.

In Theresa May's first speech as Prime Minister, she called for "a plan to help not one or even two of our great regional cities, but every single one of them".¹⁴² She has also stated that industrial strategy must reach 'all corners' of the country.¹⁴³ This has been perceived by some as a veiled criticism of the Northern Powerhouse agenda, with some commentators suggesting that an emphasis on the North - and in particular Manchester - would not necessarily be a priority for the May Government.¹⁴⁴

However, Andrew Percy, the new Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, stated in a *New Statesman* publication in September 2016:

The Northern Powerhouse is now a name recognised and admired around the world and is being backed up with massive investment in science and technology, transport and connectivity, culture and tourism and ever greater powers for local communities.¹⁴⁵

Writing in the *Yorkshire Post* in July 2016, Mrs May reaffirmed her commitment to the Northern Powerhouse, although promises for new investment were limited to funding to help bring cycling's World Road Championship to Yorkshire.¹⁴⁶ The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, also reaffirmed the Government's commitment at the Conservative Party conference on 5 October 2016:

I pledge today that the Treasury, under my leadership, will continue to drive the Northern Powerhouse project, working in partnership with local leaders to see it deliver its potential for people in the North. But our ambition isn't limited to the Northern Powerhouse.... there is nowhere more ripe to benefit from a similar approach than the Midlands.¹⁴⁷

Meanwhile, it was announced in September that a new think-tank, the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, was to be chaired by the former chancellor George Osborne.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² Rebecca Lowe Coulson, "[Theresa May's first speech as prime minister: the 'life chances' challenge](#)", 15 July 2016

¹⁴³ Henry Mance and Andrew Bounds, "[Theresa May shifts focus from 'Northern Powerhouse'](#)", *Financial Times*, 2 Aug 2016

¹⁴⁴ George Parker, "[Theresa May sets out vision for business](#)", *Financial Times*, 11 July 2016

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Percy, "Power will shift from Whitehall to the town halls of the North", *New Statesman – Spotlight*, September 2015

¹⁴⁶ "[UK backs trans-Pennine road tunnel from Manchester to Sheffield](#)", *Financial Times*, 18 August 2016; and "[Theresa May: My vision for Yorkshire's bright future](#)", *Yorkshire Post*, 18 August 2016

¹⁴⁷ Philip Hammond, [speech to Conservative Party conference](#), 5 October 2016

¹⁴⁸ Kate McCann, "[George Osborne launches Northern Powerhouse thinktank with support of Theresa May](#)", *Daily Telegraph*, 16 September 2016

5.1 The Midlands Engine

September and October 2016 have also seen further developments with regard to the 'Midlands Engine', an equivalent initiative covering the Midlands of England. A prospectus for this was originally published in January 2015.¹⁴⁹ Devolution deals in the Midlands Engine area have been agreed with the West Midlands and Greater Lincolnshire, with reports of a second, more ambitious deal with the West Midlands being underway. A report has also been published of a trade mission to the USA and Canada on behalf of the Midlands Engine, led by Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for communities and local government.¹⁵⁰ The Midlands initiative is not yet on the same scale as the Northern Powerhouse, but it may presage similar pan-regional developments in other areas of England.

¹⁴⁹ BIS, [A Midlands Engine for Growth: Prospectus](#), January 2015

¹⁵⁰ David Paine, "[Javid promotes Midlands Engine to North America](#)", *Local Government Chronicle*, 20 September 2016

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