



## DEBATE PACK

Number 0005, 5 January 2018

# Yorkshire devolution

By Mark Sandford

## Summary

A debate on devolution to Yorkshire, sponsored by Dan Jarvis MP, is to take place in Westminster Hall, at 4.30pm on Tuesday 9 January. The debate will last for one hour.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Background

## 1.1 Summary

Since November 2014, the Government has agreed ‘devolution deals’ with a number of localities across England. The first was announced by the Government and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in November 2014. Following the 2015 General Election, the then Chancellor, George Osborne, gave a speech on 14 May in which he outlined the then Government’s approach.<sup>1</sup>

In May 2017, ‘metro-mayors’ were elected in six areas that had negotiated devolution deals. No metro-mayors have been elected to date in Yorkshire: a ‘metro-mayor’ for the Sheffield City Region is due to be elected in May 2018.

Both West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire have negotiated devolution deals with the Government. A [proposal for North and East Yorkshire](#) was published in 2015, but this has not been progressed. Latterly, following various events through 2017, a proposal termed ‘One Yorkshire’ has emerged, aimed at securing a single devolved authority covering the whole of Yorkshire.

The timeline below sets out key events in the recent debate over devolution in the Yorkshire area. These events are described in greater detail in the following sub-sections.

### Yorkshire devolution: timeline

Date	Event
1 April 2014	Creation of West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Sheffield City Region Combined Authority <sup>2</sup>
December 2014	<a href="#">First Sheffield City Region devolution deal</a> published
September 2015	Several devolution proposals are received from Yorkshire local authorities, including <a href="#">devolution to North and East Ridings of Yorkshire</a>
October 2015	<a href="#">Second Sheffield City Region devolution deal</a> published
28 January 2016	<a href="#">Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016</a> becomes law

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<sup>1</sup> HM Treasury, “[Chancellor on building a Northern powerhouse](#)”, 14 May 2015

<sup>2</sup> See [the Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority Order 2014](#) (SI 2014/863).

February 2016	Reports emerge of negotiations on a further deal for West Yorkshire
21 July 2016	Mayoral election date for Sheffield City Region set as May 2017 <sup>3</sup>
December 2016	<a href="#">Judicial review</a> finds that consultation on Bassetlaw and Chesterfield joining was inadequate <sup>4</sup>
February 2017	Bassetlaw and Chesterfield withdraw applications for full membership. Further Reports of attempts to revive a full devolution deal for the Leeds city region.
March 2017	Mayoral election for Sheffield City Region postponed to May 2018 <sup>5</sup>
May 2017	Metro-mayor elections in six localities (Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, West Midlands, West of England, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, Tees Valley)
September 2017	Barnsley and Doncaster announce their intention to pursue a potential 'One Yorkshire' deal instead of the Sheffield City Region arrangements
December 2017	Referendums in Barnsley and Doncaster favour 'One Yorkshire' over Sheffield City Region by 85% to 15% (see below)

<b>Community poll results, 22 December 2017</b>	<b>Barnsley</b>	<b>Doncaster</b>
Yorkshire-wide deal	84.9%	85.2%
Sheffield City Region deal	15.1%	14.8%
Turnout	22.4%	20.1%

## 1.2 Devolution in West Yorkshire

West Yorkshire has a combined authority (covering the former metropolitan county area), which negotiated a limited devolution deal in

<sup>3</sup> [The Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority \(Election of Mayor\) Order 2016 \(SI 2016/800\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> See the full judgment at [R \(Derbyshire County Council\) v Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority](#), EWHC 3355 2016

<sup>5</sup> See the [Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority \(Election of Mayor\) \(Amendment\) Order 2017](#)

March 2015.<sup>6</sup> The members are Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Calderdale and Kirklees Councils. York City Council are associate members. The areas of Harrogate, Craven and Selby district councils fall into the 'Leeds City Region' area covered by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), but they are not members of the combined authority.

In late 2015, West Yorkshire sought to negotiate a devolution deal that would have covered this wider area. North Yorkshire County Council opposed the three districts' inclusion, signalling that they would block any attempt to transfer powers over matters such as transport from the county council to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.<sup>7</sup>

Reports in February and June 2017 indicated that negotiations had begun again, and that political disagreements also contributed to the lack of progress:

Attempts to secure a wider-ranging deal have since stagnated due in part to interference from Conservative MPs concerned about the prospect of a Labour mayor overseeing the Leeds City Region/West Yorkshire area which has led to local leaders attempting to secure a Yorkshire-wide deal instead.<sup>8</sup>

In mid-2015 Hull City Council expressed a preference to be an associate member of the WYCA. Its leader, Stephen Brady, was quoted on 1 September 2015 as follows:

Hull leader Stephen Brady (Lab) said he supported the Yorkshire-wide option, but were it not accepted, "Hull asserts it must be an integral part of the Leeds City Region devolution proposals as our functional economic areas adjoin."

Cllr Brady added: "Ensuring that Hull is a full member, and not just an associate, of a combined authority is, in our view, critical to realising the true benefits of devolution for the city."<sup>9</sup>

### 1.3 Sheffield City Region devolution

The Sheffield City Region Combined Authority was established on 1 April 2014. Its members are Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, with Bassetlaw, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, Bolsover and North-East Derbyshire as associate members. The SCRCA took over the former South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, and works very closely with the Sheffield City Region LEP (which covers the same area).

Sheffield was the second area to sign a devolution deal with the Government, in December 2014. This was followed by a more extensive deal, including establishing an elected mayor, published in October 2015.

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<sup>6</sup> HM Treasury, [Leeds City Region and West Yorkshire Devolution Agreement](#), 2015, p. 5

<sup>7</sup> David Paine, "'Gerrymandering' and threat of mayoral veto derails Leeds deal", [Local Government Chronicle \(subscription required\)](#), 11 Nov 2015

<sup>8</sup> Mark Smulian, "[Fresh bid to revive Leeds City Region devo deal](#)", *Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)*, 14 Feb 2017; David Paine, "[West Yorks leaders urge PM to conclude devo deal in 2017](#)", *Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)*, 23 June 2017

<sup>9</sup> Mark Smulian, "[Confusion over devolution for two coastal cities](#)", *Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)*, 1 September 2015

The SCRCA launched a consultation in summer 2016 regarding Chesterfield and Bassetlaw councils becoming full members of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority. This would have seen voters in those two council areas participate in electing the new combined authority mayor in May 2017. In September 2016, Derbyshire County Council launched a judicial review of the consultation's conclusion that Chesterfield Borough Council (within Derbyshire) should become a full member of the SCRCA. The case was heard on 9-10 November 2016.

On 21 December 2016, the judge found that the consultation had not been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.<sup>10</sup> Specifically, the consultation had not been sufficiently clear that Chesterfield would join the combined authority if the consultation's proposals were implemented:

Chesterfield BC's new role in the SCRCA is one of the fundamental proposals or changes to be wrought by the scheme. Although various questions in the questionnaire touched on Chesterfield BC becoming a constituent member, no question actually asked whether respondents supported that or not. Respondents via the questionnaire could attach additional evidence, and so express the view that that should not happen, but their mind was not directed to that issue.<sup>11</sup>

The judgment required the consultation to be re-run in order to be valid. This led to the mayoral election being postponed from 2017 to 2018. However, Chesterfield and Bassetlaw subsequently withdrew their applications for full membership.

In September 2017, Barnsley and Doncaster councils announced that they no longer wished to pursue the Sheffield City Region agenda, instead planning to seek devolution on a wider scale referred to as 'One Yorkshire'. They made this announcement by way of refusing to approve the statutory consultation that is required in advance of transferring the statutory powers included in the Sheffield City Region devolution deals: for instance, bus franchising, adult skills, and the various planning-related powers. As things stand, a mayor will be elected for the Sheffield City Region in May 2018 but s/he will be unable to exercise most of the powers anticipated in the devolution deals.

## 1.4 Pan-Yorkshire devolution

As a result of the abortive consultation in Sheffield, the idea of a pan-Yorkshire devolution deal acquired fresh impetus in early 2017.<sup>12</sup> Carl Les, the leader of North Yorkshire County Council, had expressed support for devolution of power to as geographically large a territory as possible in November 2016.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See the full judgment at [R \(Derbyshire County Council\) v Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority](#), EWHC 3355 2016

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> LGC Briefing, [Devolution by judicial review](#), 11 November 2016; James Reed, ["Fresh attempt to revive Yorkshire-wide devolution"](#), *Yorkshire Post*, 16 November 2016

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in *Yorkshire Post*, ["Council leader adds to Yorkshire devolution momentum"](#), 2 November 2016

Following judgment in the case concerning Chesterfield and the Sheffield City Region, local actors expressed growing interest in negotiating a pan-Yorkshire devolution deal. By June 2017, 20 local authorities from North, East and West Yorkshire had agreed to work together to pursue a 'One Yorkshire' devolution deal. This would cut across the existing pattern of combined authorities in the region. Combined authorities cannot overlap, nor can they be nested within one another. Andrew Percy MP, the then Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, was reported on 23 January 2017 as claiming that a mayor of Yorkshire would be 'not legally possible'.<sup>14</sup>

Jake Berry, current Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, [indicated in June 2017](#) that the Government would not agree to a pan-Yorkshire deal. He said in a letter to the SCRCA that "consent by the 20 councils for such an approach is very unlikely. Nor do I believe that a deal and governance across the whole of Yorkshire, given its scale and diversity, would in practice deliver the benefits that the proponents of such a deal seek".<sup>15</sup> This position was reiterated in [an adjournment debate in the House of Commons](#) on 10 October 2017.

However, subsequent announcements left open the possibility of a single devolution deal covering the *remainder* of Yorkshire: i.e. West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, the East Riding and Hull (see section 2). Then in December 2017, parts of a document were published on Twitter that appeared to indicate that a single deal for Yorkshire could be accepted by the Government in the long term (see section 3).

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<sup>14</sup> James Reed, "[Minister rejects elected mayor for whole of Yorkshire - and he's ready to ditch Sheffield deal](#)", *Yorkshire Post*, 23 January 2017. It would be legally possible to create a mayor and combined authority for the whole of Yorkshire. However, it would not be possible to do so whilst leaving the existing structures in South and West Yorkshire in place.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in David Paine, "Yorkshire devo dissenters seek deal for 'coalition of the willing'", *Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)*, 22 June 2017

## 2. Press and journal articles

### **Fresh bid to revive Leeds City Region devo deal**

David Paine, Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)

14 February 2017

### **Will neglect drive Yorkshire to a Catalan-style revolt?**

Simon Jenkins, The Guardian

4 January 2018

England's most substantial province should be on a par with Scotland, yet devolution remains a distant dream.

### **Barnsley and Doncaster voters back Yorkshire-wide devo deal**

David Paine, Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)

22 December 2017

Community poll returns an overwhelming response in favour of a Yorkshire-wide deal as opposed to remaining in the Sheffield City Region.

### **Javid 'compromise' offers hope to One Yorkshire**

Nick Golding, Local Government Chronicle

20 December 2017

Sajid Javid has offered dissident South Yorkshire councils a compromise under which they could join a future One Yorkshire devo deal after participating in Sheffield City Region CA mayoral elections next year.

### **Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu intervenes in Yorkshire devolution saga**

Rob Parson, i-news

12 December 2017

A possible solution to Yorkshire's long-running devolution stalemate that could see a region-wide mayor elected by May 2020 has emerged after an intervention by the Archbishop of York.

### **Misinformation row over South Yorkshire devolution poll**

David Walsh, The Star

11 December 2017

Barnsley and Doncaster councils have been accused of sending 'misinformation' about devolution to residents. Both authorities have sent leaflets with a polling form to every voter to gauge support for their leaders' 'One Yorkshire' ambitions.

### **Yorkshire-wide devolution would see more powers handed over than Sheffield City Region deal, say Doncaster leaders**

Rob Parson, The Yorkshire Post

4 December 2017

A devolution deal for wider Yorkshire would mean greater powers being transferred from the Government than the proposed Sheffield City Region scheme, civic leaders in a South Yorkshire district said today.

### **New devo deals expected in Autumn statement**

David Paine and Sarah Calkin, Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)

16 November 2016

Whole of Yorkshire proposal waits in the wings should the Sheffield City Region's mayoral deal collapse

### **Could God's own county win control of its own fate as 'One Yorkshire'?**

Frances Perraudin, The Guardian

12 November 2017

The One Yorkshire plan, which originated with politicians in Leeds, would see one combined devolved authority – like those established in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester and the Liverpool city region – for the whole of the county.

### **Council leader adds to Yorkshire devolution momentum**

The Yorkshire Post

2 November 2016

Proposals to revive the prospect of a region-wide deal for Yorkshire to take over powers and money from the Government have taken a significant step forward after another council leader declared he was "open" to the idea.

### **Minister defends rejection of One Yorkshire devolution proposal**

James Reed, The Yorkshire Post

16 October 2017

A Minister has insisted it is up to Yorkshire to decide its devolution future while simultaneously rejecting the One Yorkshire proposal.

### **How HS2 Sheffield Station saga helped derail devolution hopes**

Chris Burn, The Yorkshire Post

21 September 2017

For those involved in ongoing efforts to win Government backing for the 'One Yorkshire' devolution plan there is a vital lesson about the importance of a united front to be learnt from the acrimonious collapse of the rival £900m deal for the Sheffield City Region.

### **Yorkshire devolution deal scuppered by local rivalries**

Andy Bounds, Financial Times (subscription required)

18 September 2017

Doncaster and Barnsley pulled out of the Sheffield City Region deal after a brief, heated meeting of council leaders. Their decision could leave Sheffield and Rotherham to elect a new metro mayor next year whose only extra power will be to regulate buses.

### **Sheffield's devo deal collapses**

David Paine, Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)

18 September 2017

The Sheffield City Region devolution deal has fallen apart, despite a last minute intervention from communities secretary Sajid Javid

### **Sajid Javid branded 'bully' over Yorkshire devolution letter**

James Reed, The Yorkshire Post

15 September 2017

Mr Javid warned (that) the Government will not listen to any proposal for Yorkshire to take more control over its own affairs which covers South Yorkshire.

### **Council leaders ask Javid for talks over "credible" devolution plan**

James Reed, The Yorkshire Post

13 September 2017

Yorkshire Council leaders have told the Government they have a "credible" plan to take over powers and money from Whitehall through a new elected mayor for the region.

### **Devolution: Council leaders explain support for One Yorkshire deal**

James Reed, The Yorkshire Post

18 August 2017

Doncaster executive mayor Ros Jones and Barnsley Council leader Sir Steve Houghton set out why they are exploring the idea of a Yorkshire-wide devolution deal, including an elected Yorkshire mayor, rather than pressing ahead with their existing Sheffield City Region agreement.

### **West Yorks leaders urge PM to conclude devo deal in 2017**

Local Government Chronicle (subscription required)

23 June 2017

Theresa May, Sajid Javid, and Greg Clark also asked to provide more funding for the £627.5m Leeds city deal

### 3. Publication of draft negotiations 2017

Kevin Larkin, a journalist with BBC Radio Sheffield, published the following on Twitter on 4 January 2018 under the heading:

**#EXCLUSIVE: The six conditions of the South #Yorkshire #devolution compromise offer from @SajidJavid to leaders of #Barnsley #Doncaster #Rotherham and #Sheffield councils**

The following extracts were published from what appears to be a draft document acting as the starting-point for negotiations that could lead in the long term to a single devolution deal for Yorkshire, as noted in section 1.4 above.

1. Subject to the Sheffield City Region Mayor providing the undertaking described in paragraph 4 below, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, and Sheffield City Council agree to undertake as soon as practicable after 7 May 2018 (the day on which the Mayor will take office) all the steps for which they are responsible and which are necessary for the full implementation of the Devolution Agreement. Subject to the applicable statutory and legislative requirements and the approval of Parliament this will enable the Mayor to have the powers envisaged in the Devolution Agreement as soon as practicable after the election.
2. Subject to the Sheffield City Region Mayor providing the undertaking described in paragraph 4 below, the Government, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, and Sheffield City Council agree that if at any stage after the mayoral election on 3 May 2018 a One Yorkshire deal agreement comes forward and is concluded and agreed by all the councils concerned and by Government, all or any of the South Yorkshire councils which wish to do so will be free to join that deal if appropriate, providing that their joining the deal has effect from the end of the current mayor's term, meets the statutory requirements, and that arrangements are in place to maintain the integration of transport across South Yorkshire.
3. The Government and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, and Sheffield City Council also agree that if a One Yorkshire deal is in the course of negotiation, some or all of the councils in the Sheffield City Region may participate in those negotiations whilst remaining full members of the Sheffield City Region deal, and may provisionally agree to join the one Yorkshire deal.

4. The mayoral undertaking referred to above is an undertaking given by the Mayor on taking office that he or she will not refuse any consent necessary for the full implementation of the Devolution Agreement, and that if a One Yorkshire deal agreement comes forward and is concluded and agreed by all the councils concerned and by Government, he or she will not refuse any consent necessary for one or more, of the South Yorkshire councils to join that deal providing that their joining the deal has effect from the end of the current mayoral term, meets the statutory requirements, and that arrangements are in place to maintain the integration of transport across South Yorkshire.
5. Subject to paragraph 6 below, for the purposes of the above “a One Yorkshire deal agreement” is an agreement between Government and all the principal councils in Yorkshire other than those in Sheffield City Region (“the councils concerned”) for the devolution of certain powers and budgets to a mayoral combined authority, the constituent councils of which are to be those councils.
6. One or more of the councils in the Sheffield City Region may provisionally be a party to a One Yorkshire deal agreement, in which case the agreement may include provision that would be applicable if the provisional party were to become a full party to the agreement. A council which is a provisional party to a One Yorkshire deal agreement is not for the purposes of the paragraphs above one of “the councils concerned”.

## 4. Parliamentary material

### 4.1 Written parliamentary questions

#### **HL1663 (Devolution: Yorkshire and the Humber) 16 Oct 2017**

**Bishop of Leeds:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Yorkshire councils' "coalition of the willing" to secure a single devolution deal for Yorkshire.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** Government has no intention to undo the legislation on the Sheffield City Region deal that has already been enacted in Parliament, including legislation for a mayoral election in May 2018. In response to 17 leaders of the "coalition of the willing", the Government has made it clear that we would welcome any widely supported proposal for a Yorkshire devolution deal involving a single mayoral combined authority and on an appropriate geography that did not include the Sheffield City Region.

#### **HL1485 (Devolution: Yorkshire and the Humber) 14 Sep 2017**

**Lord Scriven:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the merits of (1) establishing a Yorkshire-wide devolution settlement, and (2) members of the Sheffield City Region devolution deal joining that settlement at a later date.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Government is committed to implementing and has legislated for the Sheffield City Region devolution deal. The Government has not received any proposal for a Yorkshire wide deal and any assessment of the merits of such a deal would have to take account of this pre-existing legislative commitment. The Sheffield City Region having implemented its devolution deal is not precluded in future from joining a wider Yorkshire devolution deal, were this to be agreed with Government and all the authorities involved.

#### **HL1032 (Devolution: Yorkshire and the Humber) 1 Aug 2017**

**Lord Scriven:** Her Majesty's Government whether they support (1) a Yorkshire-wide devolution deal, and (2) West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire devolution deals.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** The Government agreed a devolution deal with Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield in 2015, and to which the four councils reaffirmed their commitment in 2016 and 2017 when consenting to Parliamentary Orders establishing the mayoral election for May 2018. It is now for the councils to take the remaining steps - to hold a public consultation on the proposed devolution of powers and consent to the order needed, subject to Parliamentary approval, for the full implementation of the deal.

No further proposals have been put forward to the Government.

## 4.2 Oral parliamentary questions

### Regional Economic Growth

**HC Deb 28 Nov 2017 c146-8**

**Dan Jarvis:** The economic case for a wider Yorkshire devolved settlement is compelling, so much so that in Yorkshire it is supported by the CBI, the Institute of Directors, the Federation of Small Businesses, the TUC and many of the Chancellor's own colleagues in local government. Does he recognise the strength of the economic argument, and, if he does, can he speak to his colleagues in the Department for Communities and Local Government?

**Mr Hammond:** The Government are committed to the Sheffield city region deal, which will bring £1 billion of new Government investment to the area. We recognise the debate that is going on about a possible wider Yorkshire-based deal and we are happy to consider that, if it can be done in a way that does not disrupt the existing deal that has been agreed for the Sheffield city region.

## 4.3 Parliamentary debates

### Budget: North East of England

**HC Deb 14 Dec 2017 c1661-3**

**Lord Blunkett (Lab):** My Lords, the Minister may not have a handle on the tribal conflicts in the north-east, but I have a slightly better handle on the tribal conflicts in Yorkshire. There is a real worry that the whole of the east Pennines is losing out in relation to resources which would otherwise be available if the plans for elected mayors in the city regions there had actually been carried through. If they do occur in the months ahead, will the noble Lord give an assurance that the resources earmarked for authorities with elected mayors will be available, and backdated, for combined authorities that move forward with an elected mayor in the way he has described?

**Lord Young of Cookham:** The noble Lord will know that there is a Sheffield regional city devolution deal with an elected mayor. That is being set up, with an election scheduled I think for May next year. If other parts of Yorkshire want to approach the Government and offer a similar devolution deal, of course we would listen. When it comes to backdating resources, my colleagues in the Treasury might just pause before signing up to that one. But what we do not want to do is have an all-Yorkshire deal which then unwinds the deal that is already going ahead with the Sheffield City Region. The Government would listen very warmly to any work the noble Lord can do to encourage more authorities to come forward with devolution deals and elected mayors. [Extract]

## **Yorkshire: Devolution**

**HC Deb 16 Oct 2017 c400-3**

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire:** To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to progress devolution to Yorkshire.

### **The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government and Northern Ireland Office**

**(Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth) (Con):** My Lords, we welcome the discussions council leaders and others are having in Yorkshire about future devolution. If they come forward with a widely supported proposal for a greater Yorkshire deal involving a mayoral combined authority and not unravelling the existing Sheffield City Region deal, we are, of course, ready to progress it with them.

**Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD):** My Lords, 17 of the 20 councils in Yorkshire came forward, on an all-party basis, with a one Yorkshire deal earlier this summer. The Minister will be well aware of the difficulties now that Barnsley and Doncaster have withdrawn from the Sheffield/South Yorkshire deal. It has also had strong support from regional business—the Conservative Party used to be the party of business. Can the Minister tell us why the Government are giving the very strong impression that they do not support a one Yorkshire deal and why the Yorkshire Post reports this morning that a number of Conservative councils across Yorkshire have apparently now withdrawn their support for this all-party, one Yorkshire deal?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, I know the noble Lord is very familiar with the position in Yorkshire, but I must correct him on the withdrawal of Barnsley and Doncaster, which he had inferred, from the Sheffield City Region deal. They have not withdrawn; they are not progressing the consultation, but that is somewhat different.

**Noble Lords:** Oh!

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** It is somewhat different. In relation to the existing position, it is absolutely clear, as the noble Lord indicated, that not all Yorkshire authorities will wish to progress with a deal that includes Sheffield. Sheffield City Region is split. The two larger authorities wish to progress with it; in the other two authorities, there is dissent as the noble Lord indicated. We encourage them to go ahead. The deal has been done, and people there have an expectation that it will be carried forward, and that is what we wish to see. If the other authorities want to come forward with a Yorkshire deal excluding Sheffield, we will look seriously at it.

**Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate (Con):** My Lords, I have been involved for some time with the discussions about devolution for Yorkshire. I congratulate my noble friend and his ministerial colleagues on their patience and on their hard work with the local authorities and other interests to try to bring this about. Is it not correct that until there is consensus and a broad spread of support from cities and rural areas throughout Yorkshire, which we all know is a very fine brand, progress cannot be made? Is the Minister of the view that progress can be made

if the greater Yorkshire model, which now appears to be subscribed to by most people, is progressed?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** I am grateful to my noble friend, who knows what he is talking about in the context of Yorkshire as he has great experience. If a deal is to go forward, it will be on the basis that the existing deal, which the four constituent parts of the Sheffield City Region have subscribed to on many occasions, goes forward independently. If the other authorities—and it is for them to come together to determine this—wish to progress a greater Yorkshire deal, they can do so. If the authorities wished to combine thereafter—and that would be a matter for them—it would be possible for that to be discussed further down the line, but we have an existing deal, on which a great deal of time and energy has been expended locally and in both Houses of Parliament.

...

**Lord Shutt of Greetland (LD):** My Lords, I think I heard it correctly that the Minister was hinting that if there were to be a greater Yorkshire deal—which I certainly hope there is—he would like there to be a greater Sheffield deal as well, and that at some future date there could be a merger. If that is the Government's clear view, will they shout it from the rooftops? That could help a great deal, because the people of Yorkshire want a Yorkshire deal.

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, that last proposition is untested. There are many different things that the people of Yorkshire want. What I did say, which I will happily restate, is that it is for the people of Yorkshire to decide where this goes ultimately. We have an existing Sheffield deal which I am sure noble Lords will understand we must progress with. If the rest of Yorkshire wants to come forward with a greater Yorkshire deal, that is for them, and thereafter it will be the subject of discussions between those two separate authorities if they want to progress things further.

**Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Lab):** My Lords, it all seems a bit shambolic. The Government are determined to press ahead with a deal that two authorities in South Yorkshire, namely Barnsley and Doncaster, no longer wish to progress with. Is there now not a case for looking again at the whole arrangement here and putting in place a deal that commands the support of all local authorities in Yorkshire, as well as the people who live there and business and civil society throughout that great county?

**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth:** My Lords, that thesis would be all very well were it anywhere near the truth. I refer the noble Lord to the comments of the Member for Sheffield, the honourable Clive Betts, and to those of the leader of Sheffield. He will know as well as I do that this is all about a discussion—I will not push it any further than that—about who is going to be the mayoral candidate for Sheffield. That is the reality of why some of the authorities in South Yorkshire do not like it. I would encourage them to do what other political parties will be doing: select a candidate and fight those elections in the interests of that area.

## Adjournment debate on devolution: Yorkshire

HC Deb 10 Oct 2017 c301-10

**John Grogan (Keighley) (Lab):** [.....] Let me start by examining a proposal that has been signed by 17 Labour and Conservative councils—when last I checked, not one had withdrawn its name. They are proposing a single mayor and a single combined authority for the areas they represent, which is perfectly in line with the current law, as the Minister has agreed in a parliamentary answer. I want to consider not what might happen in future Parliaments, but what we can achieve in this Parliament, because, representing God’s own county, we all have a responsibility to do that.

**Kevin Hollinrake (Thirsk and Malton) (Con):** Does the hon. Gentleman feel that we have a responsibility to consider all the options? He mentioned 17 local authority leaders. The nine across north Yorkshire, who did sign up to the One Yorkshire deal in principle, are keen to explore the option of Greater Yorkshire, which is a deal on the table that we could progress today. Does he not think that we should be exploring that option?

**John Grogan:** Interestingly, none of those nine local authorities has yet withdrawn its name from the 17 that signed up to explore the Yorkshire deal. Some have admitted to me that they have benefited from re-education at last week’s Conservative party conference and now better understand the Government’s position, but Councillor Carl Les, who is a very good friend of mine from my days in north Yorkshire, said today that he still favours the widest possible deal. He doubted whether he could persuade the Minister, but I am more confident that we can do so.

It is interesting to look at the geography, because it includes the north of the Humber but not the south, and I recognise that there would need to be strong links between the north and the south however this plays out. The proposed combined authority would control things such as transport. On the basis of deals elsewhere, it might have £150 million to spend that is currently spent by Whitehall. It would look after skills, and there are some imaginative proposals, including that the regional schools commissioner should report to the mayor because we need to improve the performance of Yorkshire’s academies. The mayor would also oversee the team that promotes international trade in Yorkshire.

There are lots of exciting ideas, but it is Yorkshire’s identity that matters to me. Whether at Keighley Cougars, Sheffield United, Sheffield Wednesday or Leeds United, people do not chant, “Sheffield city region!” or “South Yorkshire!”; they chant, “Yorkshire!” [...]

One newspaper that comes out of this whole saga with credit is The Yorkshire Post, and I want to read just two sentences from its editorial this morning:

“This debate is a litmus test which will define the future relationship between Ministers and Yorkshire. While the city-region model is working elsewhere, a Yorkshire-wide devolution deal has the potential

to be truly transformative and Ministers will not be thanked if they're unable to recognise the once-in-a-generation opportunity that exists at long last."

[.....]

**John Grogan:** Perhaps to encourage my hon. Friend to do so, let me say that I am afraid that the Sheffield city region deal is much diminished. Obviously, Barnsley and Doncaster signed up, and there was the hope that various authorities in Derbyshire would be involved. Sadly, that has now changed. Although the deal is about the same in terms of money—slightly more than Manchester, but quite a bit less than the west of England—if we look at the powers we can do better in the whole of Yorkshire. There is no housing investment fund in the Sheffield city region deal, no control of railway stations and no community infrastructure levy. All those things are held by the Mayor of Manchester, so why do we have to have second best in Yorkshire? We can negotiate better than that across the whole of Yorkshire. [...]

**Mr Betts:** I thank my hon. Friend for allowing me to intervene. He accuses the Government of not talking, but they have talked at great length to the leaders of councils and to councils in the Sheffield city region. When the deal was signed up to by the four council leaders in the South Yorkshire districts in 2014, that was before Chesterfield and Bassetlaw came in. They came in at a later stage and if they had not, the deal would have been agreed and an election would have been held this year for an elected mayor. That will now happen next year. All those four leaders signed up to the election and the statutory instrument is being put through. I ask my hon. Friend to do a deal for his constituency and the rest of Yorkshire, and not to let our deal be held up on that basis.

**John Grogan:** I am slightly disappointed, as I was hoping that my hon. Friend would announce his candidature for Sheffield city mayor, but I will give way if he decides to make such an announcement tonight. The plain fact of the matter for my hon. Friend and for the Government is whether they are seriously going to impose an expensive mayoral election on the people of South Yorkshire when two of the four authorities are opposed to it. Are they seriously going to do that for a mayor who will have no powers and no money?

I am all in favour of all-party talks and I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield South East has been working closely with the Government on this, but I would ask him, the Government and John Mothersole, who is the chief executive of South Yorkshire and a distinguished public servant, but perhaps a little too associated with one deal, whether we could try another plan—the best chief executives always have a plan A, a plan B, a plan C and a plan D—which I will suggest in a spirit of compromise. Members of all parties at a local and national level have been ringing me up over the past few days. Some have suggested a staged approach if there was a commitment to all-Yorkshire devolution. My hon. Friend has said himself that he would not rule that out in the future. Our good colleague, and former MP, Richard

Caborn, has said the same. He would not rule that out. Could we not do it now? We could bring it in very rapidly. Perhaps we could have that staged approach with a mayoral election in South Yorkshire followed by an all-Yorkshire election a couple of years later. Those are possibilities.

I have one more suggestion to make to the Minister in a moment, but I just want to look briefly at one other factor. I said yesterday that an idea is serious once people start betting on it, and I noted today that a book has been opened on the first Yorkshire mayor. I was rather surprised that I was at 4-1. I am not sure whether anybody, even a member of my family, has put a bet on today, but I am ruling myself out. Various other hon. Members are on the list, but I will not embarrass them. I will say only that Jessica Ennis-Hill is at 33-1 and it surprises me that she is the first woman on that list, because there are many, many strong candidates. I can think of four women council leaders in Yorkshire off the top of my head, and it would be something if Yorkshire were to have the first female major metropolitan mayor.

**Kevin Hollinrake:** When the Select Committee took evidence from Lord Kerslake about devolution, he made it clear that a stepping stone approach may well work in terms of different devolution deals. Why would the hon. Gentleman not now commit to moving ahead with Greater Yorkshire? What is it about Doncaster and Barnsley that is so attractive to Keighley that he needs those in a deal in order to move ahead with it? Why is that?

**John Grogan:** In direct response to that, let me conclude with a suggestion to the Minister. It is possible that he will not initiate talks tonight. I hope he will—I have great hope and faith—but he may just not do so. This Minister from a Lancashire constituency—I put it delicately—may tell us a lot about his three happy years as a student in Sheffield, and we are looking forward to hearing about that, but it is just possible that to solve this problem we need a higher authority than the Minister—the Secretary of State, the Prime Minister or even the Prime Minister's hero, Geoffrey Boycott. I am secretary of the all-party group on Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire and I have written to the Archbishop of York asking him to consider calling a meeting of all those involved in the devolution process to try to make some progress, which the people of Yorkshire sorely need. The Archbishop of York's office has told me that he is supportive of the process of Yorkshire devolution, and he will closely examine the proposals of the 17 councils involved and will be in contact with the bishops of Leeds and Sheffield about the most appropriate course of action to take.

So I leave the Minister with two questions. Are the Government against the principle of One Yorkshire devolution or, as various hon. Members have suggested, would they be prepared to accept it as the final destination on an agreed staged process over the next two or three years? Secondly, if it is forthcoming, would the Minister accept an invitation from the Archbishop of York, even if he will not initiate talks himself, to take part in talks on Yorkshire devolution and how the people of Yorkshire can get what many of the great cities of England already have?

[.....]

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (Jake Berry):** I congratulate the hon. Member for Keighley (John Grogan) on securing such an important debate.

In May this year, just five months ago, six metro mayors were elected to the combined authorities in England. Those six mayors—three in the northern powerhouse—have the power to create jobs, improve skills, drive forward their local economy and improve transport. Already they are creating a single point of accountability for residents, and have become powerful advocates for their area. Let us consider two of them. Ben Houchen in the Tees Valley has created the first mayoral development corporation outside London and is already attracting not just national but international businesses to the Tees Valley so that he can turn around SSI—Sahaviriya Steel Industries—steelworks. One mayor, one point of accountability driving forward his economy.

Andy Burnham, who will be familiar to those on the Labour Benches, is the metro mayor for the great city of Manchester. In one of the most striking acts of leadership that I have seen, he stood strong, representing his city and our whole nation, against a terrorist outrage that took place in that city just days after he was elected. One city, one mayor standing together against terrorism.

As with all devolution settlements across the United Kingdom, the process of passing powers from central Government to our regions is a one-way street. Metro mayors are already asking the Government what happens once they have fully implemented their devolution deal. What is the next natural step to return power, money and influence to their region?

These early adopters, these mayors, are viewed with envy by the residents and the business communities around them. When people turn on their telly and see Ben Houchen, Steve Rotherham and Andy Burnham standing there with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as they did this summer, they naturally ask—as I have been asked in Yorkshire—why is my area being left behind?

The metro mayors, created by this Government, form a partnership of equals with Government. They sit at the top table to talk about housing, economic development and, crucially, Brexit. That is why this Government believe that the South Yorkshire devolution deal should proceed. There can be no devolution two without a devolution one going on in the first place.

The hon. Member for Keighley asked why Manchester has so many powers. Manchester and its mayor have currently negotiated four deals with the Government. The Sheffield city region deal is the start of devolution, not the end of it. As a Conservative Government, we are not making a narrow political point. We will not gain any advantage from having a South Yorkshire mayor. I guess that the people of Barnsley, Rotherham, Doncaster and Sheffield deserve the devolution that they have been promised.

Those areas came together in 2015 and asked this Government for the deal. We believed then—and still believe now—that passing power and money from Whitehall to those town halls can transform the lives of people in South Yorkshire. Then Barnsley, Rotherham, Doncaster and Sheffield reaffirmed their commitment to the deal—not once, not twice but on three separate occasions. At their request, not the Government's request, we legislated on two occasions to put ourselves in the position that we are in today. It is the law of the land, debated in this House, passed by this House, and voted on by this House that the mayoral election in the Sheffield city region will take place on 3 May 2018. The Sheffield city region deal is by all measures a good deal. It will bring £30 million a year of new Government money into one of the most deprived regions of the UK. It is one of the most generous devolution deals the Government have agreed. It equates to £22 per person per year in the Sheffield city region, compared with just £11 in Manchester.

On 3 May 2018, when the new South Yorkshire mayor is elected, the people of South Yorkshire—not the politicians—will, just like the people of the Tees Valley, Manchester and Liverpool, have a strong local voice to represent them at the top table with the Government.

While it is unfortunate that two of the local authorities that signed up to that deal in its original form have not consented to proceed to consult on the powers of the mayor, I can confirm that, as far as the Conservative party is concerned, I spoke last night to my right hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire Dales (Sir Patrick McLoughlin), who is the Conservative party chairman, and we are proceeding to select our candidate for this important election.

The reason I make that point is that I say this to the new mayor of South Yorkshire, whoever he or she may be: we understand the challenges South Yorkshire faces, we believe that an elected mayor can give South Yorkshire the leadership it clearly needs, and we will work with them, whoever they may be, to ensure that the nearly £1 billion of Government money that has been promised to South Yorkshire is delivered to the people of South Yorkshire.

It took my breath away when the leader of Sheffield City Council, Julie Dore, told me this summer that she never thought she would live to see the day in South Yorkshire when a Labour council—in fact, two Labour councils—egged on by local MPs, would reject £1 billion from a Tory Government because of factionalism and infighting in the Labour party in South Yorkshire. [.....]

**Jake Berry:** Let me turn to devolution in the rest of Yorkshire. We welcome the discussions that have taken place over the summer, with talks having restarted after a significant period of stalemate. It is absolutely clear that there is no agreement around what has been referred to as the One Yorkshire deal. A report in Sheffield's *The Star* yesterday confirmed that 11 of the 20 councils in Yorkshire support this proposal. York, Hambleton, Harrogate, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, Ryedale and Wakefield have said that they will not proceed with it. Although some elements of the media may choose to ignore that

inconvenient truth, it is simply not the case that the coalition of the willing has had or does have wide support for its proposal.

As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made clear in his letter dated 15 September, he is happy to meet leaders to discuss a Greater Yorkshire deal, which could be an exciting and groundbreaking devolution deal, passing real power and real influence from the people in London back to the people of Greater Yorkshire. He has also confirmed that a Greater Yorkshire deal should not and cannot include any of the South Yorkshire boroughs. That is because to do so would undermine fundamentally the position of good faith that underpins both the Sheffield city region deal and all devolution deals that the Government seek to negotiate.

**Nic Dakin (Scunthorpe) (Lab):** If there were a desire from the northern Lincolnshire area to be involved in that process, would that be looked at by Ministers?

**Jake Berry:** Whoever is involved in the Greater Yorkshire deal, it is for Greater Yorkshire leaders to decide, perhaps with Lincolnshire, whether that should proceed.

In conclusion, if Yorkshire leaders come to Government with a widely supported, ground-up Greater Yorkshire deal involving— [...]

If Yorkshire leaders come to Government with a widely supported, ground-up Greater Yorkshire deal involving a single mayoral combined authority that does not in any way undermine the Sheffield city region deal, we will welcome that. We stand ready. We will meet with people, including John Sentamu, because we believe that that deal, together with the South Yorkshire deal, has the potential to drive forward devolution in Yorkshire.

## 5. Further reading and useful links

### **Where next for Yorkshire devolution**

Jack Kellam, Institute for Government

15 Nov 2017

### **Devolution to Yorkshire: The hole in the Northern Powerhouse?**

Akash Paun and Maddy Thimont Jack, British Academy

2017

### **A Mayor for Yorkshire**

Alexandra Jones, Centre for cities

13 Jan 2017

### **Sheffield City Region Devolution**

Sheffield City Region Executive Team: Our partnership is made up of the nine local authority areas working with the Private Sector. Working together, we are able to speak with one voice nationally and make better decisions about important economic growth.

### **West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

West Yorkshire Combined Authority brings together the public sector in the form of the five West Yorkshire districts plus York, and the business sector through the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Combined Authority is also the Transport Authority for West Yorkshire.

The Combined Authority is a governing board of nine political leaders, plus the chair of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It is supported by an officer organisation.

### **Sheffield City Region**

Sheffield City Region Combined Authority comprises a formal membership of Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster whilst also including the councils of Bassetlaw, Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales and Bolsover as "non-constituent" members.

### **Yorkshire Devolution Movement**

The Yorkshire Devolution Movement is an independent pressure group set up in 2012 to campaign for a directly elected regional assembly for Yorkshire.

### **Yorkshire Party**

The Yorkshire Party is a progressive political party made up of autonomous local groups and individuals who are united by a shared belief that Yorkshire needs a voice at European, national and regional level.

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