



# VIVA LA DEVOLUTION

WHAT SIX NEW METRO MAYORS WILL MEAN FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Portland

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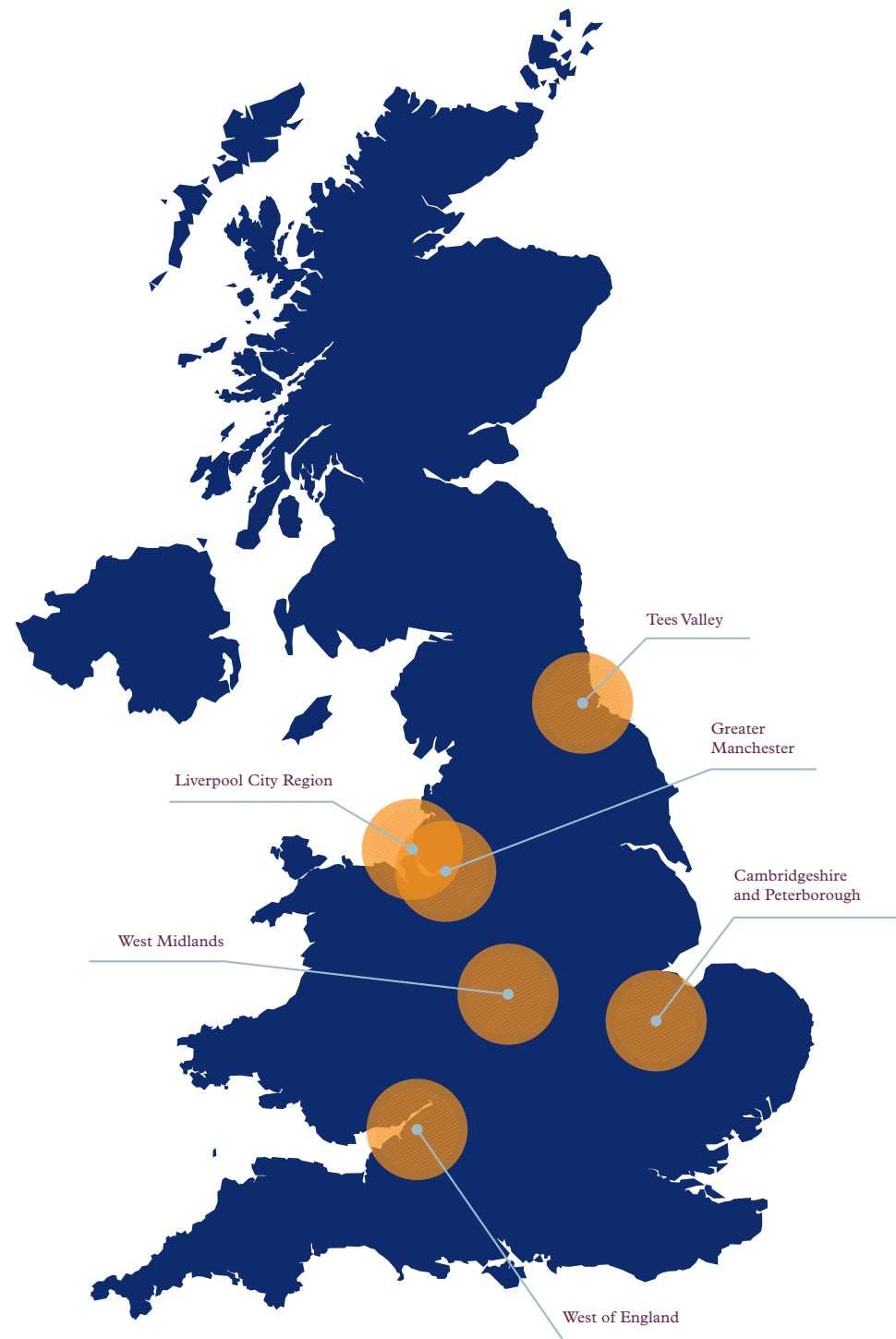
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# Foreword

On 4th May, six regions – Greater Manchester, Merseyside, West Midlands, West of England, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and Tees Valley - elected a combined authority mayor for the first time. This is the start of a process that will see billions of pounds transferred away from Whitehall to the regions by the end of the decade.

The scope of the powers being devolved varies from region to region, however, they are already far reaching. Housing and planning, transport, skills, economic development, justice and health will no longer be administered from Whitehall alone.

**Any business or organisation with a direct or indirect interest in these sectors needs to understand the scale of this change and how it will affect them – as well as the opportunities available to engage.**

English devolution has had many false starts. From Regional Development Agencies to the Northern Powerhouse, successive Governments have put in place the structures and the funding to help the UK's regions become masters of their own destiny. Until now, these measures have not captured the imagination of the wider public. With metro mayors, similar in profile and mandate to the Mayor of London, there is the potential to effect real change in these areas – delivering high profile schemes, driving inward investment and finding strategic solutions to regional problems.

At present, there are still unanswered questions as to how these new mayors will operate. While the combined authorities have been establishing their structures for some time, it is likely that the incoming mayors will take some time to understand how to work with them as they tentatively explore fulfilling their campaign pledges. Given the General Election on 8<sup>th</sup> June, it can be assumed that their first action will be to use their new regional profile to campaign for parliamentary candidates, but what else will they be trying to achieve in their first one hundred days? How should businesses engage with them during this time?

By  
**CHRIS HOGWOOD**

Chris is Partner and Head of Portland's Local team. With strong ties across local and regional government, Chris supports clients through contentious issues, helping them to build meaningful relationships in town and city halls across the country. He previously worked for the local government pressure group London Councils.



The scope of the powers being devolved varies from region to region, however, they are already far reaching.



**Portland's dedicated Local team has the knowledge of key decision makers and first-hand insight into the development of the devolution agenda – both nationally and at a local level.**

We are here to ensure your organisation is equipped to meet the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that will arise from this new chapter in devolution. In this publication, we bring together leading figures in the debate around English devolution to shed light on these changes and ensure your organisation is best placed to meet them.

As with any new administration, the first hundred days will be crucial in setting the tone for the Mayor's time in office.

New mayors will be looking for partners to help them make a mark and to implement their manifestos. In his contribution, Conservative MP and former Deputy Mayor of London, Kit Malthouse, argues that businesses that approach new mayors with cost effective proposals that can help them "leave their mark" on their area, are likely to get a good hearing.

Miatta Fahnbulleh, Director of Policy Research at IPPR, argues

that the first generation of mayors will need to do three things in their first three years - deliver quick wins, forge a political coalition with local authority leaders and fight for greater devolution of power from Whitehall.

**Eamonn Boylan, Chief Executive of Greater Manchester Combined Authority, says the success of devolution will depend on the strength of the relationship between the public and private sectors; driven forward by Local Enterprise Partnerships.**

Henri Murison, Director of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, believes metro mayors will help link together the cities of the north of England, allowing it the kind of advantages of scale that London enjoys.






# City government as the solution

*By*  
**KIT MALTHOUSE MP**

Kit was first elected as the MP for North West Hampshire in 2015. He previously spent eight years as London Assembly Member for the West Central constituency, including four years as Boris Johnson's Deputy Mayor for Policing and a further three as Deputy Mayor for Business.





**Post war over-centralisation in Whitehall left our politics unbalanced and the powerful less responsive to the people.**

The newly-elected metro mayors represent an enormous opportunity to reshape this country and lift the tone of politics generally. Any visitor to Manchester, Birmingham or Liverpool can see for themselves what a more ambitious and optimistic city polity was able to achieve in the 19th century. Since then, these great cities have lagged behind London for want of leadership but now have the chance to burst onto the stage as global cities in their own right.

**The role of businesses should be to imbue the new mayors with that same 18th century ambition from the word go. The opportunity is so great because this potential has been neglected for so long.**

Post war over-centralisation in Whitehall left our politics unbalanced and the powerful less responsive to the people. Denuded of their position as regional capitals, it is easy to understand why these cities turned inwards. My home city of Liverpool went from triumphantly building the largest neo-classical temple in the world in the 1850's to demolishing its bombed out palatial customs house a century later to ease rampant unemployment.

**Since then London has commanded the lion's share of investment and attention while other regions saw relative stagnation.**

There were sporadic attempts to ease the capital's guilt - Michael Heseltine famously took coach loads of industry captains north to show them around in the 1980s, scattering the regions with development corporations, designed to sidestep local government. George Osborne has pioneered the Northern Powerhouse concept, similarly dragooning city financiers and even foreign autocrats into contemplating investment. Critically though, for the first time, we are seeing proposals to make local politics more powerful not less. It has finally dawned on Whitehall that city government is not the problem, it is the solution.

**Having served as Deputy Mayor for Policing and then for Business and Enterprise in London I know that the transition for an incoming mayoral administration can be tricky and that economic development, so crucial to the confidence of a city, can slip down the agenda as priorities compete.**

It's why I suggested Mayor Johnson specifically create the office of Deputy Mayor for Business and Enterprise and why I was keen to do the job myself.





**Seek out opportunities and get the mayor to throw their weight behind them. At least two trade missions a year should be the target.**

**So, what to expect and how can you keep the economic matters at the forefront of the mayor's mind.**

First, despite their influence on the Local Enterprise Partnerships, expect the mayors to face spending constraints. The most successful ideas businesses can present will be those that don't eat into the budget. Suggest something that the mayor can stop doing or do better and you'll definitely get a hearing. Remember, the mayor's diary will be filled with people asking for money.

Second, all mayors love to leave their mark on the city - planning things, building things and cutting ribbons.

**Make sure that the Mayor makes space for business by getting him or her to look over the plans, dig the foundation, top out and open the door on completion wherever possible. All four events give you the chance to make the point - business matters.**

Third, all mayors adore travelling and can come into their own in promoting cities abroad. With big name cities like Manchester and Birmingham they can develop international brands just as London has. The job of business is

to encourage this global outlook and help shape the brand into one of optimism: seek out opportunities and get the mayor to throw their weight behind them. At least two trade missions a year should be the target.

between city hall and business must be a two way street if the objectives and ambition of both are to be self-reinforcing.

Above all, don't be shy, the new mayor is waiting for your call.

**Finally, you must persist. The people who made the most impact on us at City Hall were those who called incessantly with positive, interesting ideas and wouldn't take no for an answer.**

Always ready to help with a photocall, to host a meeting or promote a mayoral initiative, they recognised that the relationship



# A three year fight for relevance

*By*

**MIATTA  
FAHNBULLEH, IPPR**

Miatta is Director of Policy Research at IPPR. Prior to joining IPPR, she was a Deputy Director in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, heading up the Cities Policy Unit, where she was responsible for designing and driving forward the Government's economic devolution agenda in England.





Since the vote on 4th May, city-region mayors are now a feature of our political landscape.

For some, mayors are a turning point with the potential to offer the political leadership needed to transform their areas. But for many, they represent an unnecessary tier of local government across political boundaries that the public don't recognise or have any affinity to – irrelevant to the lives of the people they claim to represent.

**To prove their relevance and win the licence to effect change, the first generation of mayors will need to do three things in their first three years.**

First, they must gain political support amongst an electorate that had no say in their creation and did not turn out to vote for them in large numbers. This means delivering some quick wins in the next three years that demonstrates the value of the mayor.

With powers limited to joint decisions over economic investment, bus franchising, housing, strategic planning, funding for adult skills provision and integration of health and social care, mayors will need to be tactical about where they deploy their political capital in their first term.

Public transport with the offer of subsidised fares for certain groups – pensioners or young people looking for work – and smart ticketing across the bus, tram and metro networks has obvious public appeal. Building more affordable housing for sale and rent has equal appeal. Or the simple promise of millions of pounds of investment into the local economy to create jobs and opportunities for local people.

Three years is a short time to make good on these promises. If mayors can deliver some change in a few defined areas and combine this with visibility, a strong political voice and the ability to advocate effectively on behalf of their residents, they may yet convince their electorate of their worth.

Second, they must forge a political coalition with local councillors who may see the Mayor as an imposition from Whitehall that they did not want. The balance of power in combined authorities gives mayors limited scope to govern without consensus. To succeed, they must find common ground with local leaders and collaborate across local authority boundaries to advance the interest of the city-region.

**Turning the Combined Authority into an effective regional institution with a common purpose defined by the Mayor and the capacity to work across authorities to deliver change will be key.**

**Three years is a short time to make good on these promises; but if mayors can deliver some change in a few defined areas and combine this with visibility, a strong political voice and the ability to effectively advocate on behalf of their residents, they may yet convince their electorate of their worth.**



Finally, mayors will need to fight for greater devolution of power from Whitehall if they are to have any hope of delivering further gains in their next term. The question will be whether a Government still dealing with the fall-out from Brexit and embroiled in a complex divorce with its European partners, will have the political will or the bandwidth to take this on.

Against this backdrop, mayors must force devolution onto the political agenda and be at the forefront of the clamour to 'take back control' and put power in the hands of the

people who live in, work and understand the communities they are trying to help.

And to do this, they must join forces along with London, to provide a united front calling for further devolution in the months and years ahead.

If they can strike further devolution deals that give them real power to tackle the problems facing their communities, they will have the licence to go back to their electorates in 2020 to seek a mandate for change, backed up by the levers to make this a reality.





By  
**EAMONN BOYLAN,**  
Greater Manchester Combined Authority

# A quiet revolution

Eamonn was appointed Chief Executive of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in January 2017. Through his work with the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, he played a key role in the emerging policy framework for city regions. Eamonn takes the lead role on Investment and on Planning and Housing for the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Wider Leadership Team.



**In Greater Manchester, we know that we are stronger when we work together: we will only build on our successes if civic leaders and businesses continue to work in concert.**



On the 8th May 2017, a quiet revolution took place. The arrival of mayors in six metropolitan regions of England represents a step change in the way our cities are governed.

These prominent figures, with significant powers and responsibilities, are a single point of accountability for their regions and a powerful voice for their people, opening the next chapter of English devolution.

**Greater Manchester's success, however, is built upon a longer tale of co-operation and collaboration, between different parts of the region and, vitally, its civic leaders and business.**

This close partnership has led to four ground-breaking devolution deals with government, which have placed Greater Manchester

at the vanguard of English devolution. These deals have given us devolved responsibility for the £6 billion health and social care budget, a £300 million Housing Investment Fund, and the largest transport investment programme outside of London.

**At the heart of this highly successful relationship between the public and private sectors lies Greater Manchester's Local Enterprise Partnership.**

The LEP's board contains representatives from a range of Greater Manchester's industrial sectors and is shaping the region's strategy. Its successes include securing £660 million through our Growth Deal with Government to create up to 6,250 jobs and generate an additional £210 million of public and private investment; it is helping to establish Greater Manchester's two enterprise zones – at Airport City and Corridor Manchester, and assisting the development of the Greater Manchester Investment Fund, which has loaned more than £195 million to over 100 companies across the conurbation for the creation of over 6,500 jobs.

The newly elected Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, has made it clear that he wishes to continue and strengthen this long-standing and mutually beneficial relationship: the Mayor's manifesto set out how he will build a “new, dynamic and collaborative relationship with businesses”. The Mayor consulted closely with businesses during the drawing up of his manifesto, and his policies, for example on skills and infrastructure, reflect their input.

**A clear indication of the Mayor's commitment to this relationship with business was his immediate appointment of Sir Richard Leese – Leader of Manchester City Council and one of the architects of that close collaboration between civic leaders and businesses – as his Deputy Mayor, with responsibility for business and the economy.**

The new Mayor has also been clear that he is keen to hear new ideas and views on the taking the success of Greater Manchester's businesses even further. That is why he is setting up a Mayor's Business Advisory Panel, with a revolving membership, representative of Greater Manchester as a whole. The Panel will work closely with the LEP to provide guidance on policies and insight on future challenges.

The Mayor is clear: our region is entering a new era, but one in which businesses will continue to play a vital role in the development and improvement of the conurbation. In Greater Manchester, we know that we are stronger when we work together: we will only build on our successes if civic leaders and businesses continue to work in concert.



# The opportunity for the regions

*By*

**HENRI MURISON,**  
The Northern Powerhouse Partnership

Henri is the Director of The Northern Powerhouse Partnership which represents businesses and civic leaders across the North and is chaired by former Chancellor George Osborne.





**The North should be a magnet for people looking to invest and grow a business whilst also enjoying an excellent quality of life.**

The recent arrival of three new combined authority mayors across the North is a welcome development at a time when the UK has been constrained by being one of the most centralised economies in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These mayors will understand their communities better than national administrations and will also be more accountable to them, which will hopefully lead to a greater focus on problem solving rather than circular debates.

This structure will also better link together the cities of the north of England and allow the region the kind of advantages of scale that bigger cities such as London enjoy. There is no doubt that following their arrival, new mayors will enable the Northern Powerhouse to kick on and create the additional 850,000 jobs that we believe can be delivered by 2050. Fail to take this opportunity, and the North will fall further behind and the UK economy and will become even more unbalanced.

**These metro mayors stood for election in parts of our country where there has been a growing frustration with globalisation and**

**in particular, the lack of regional opportunity that it has generated. Free trade, and new and open technology have increased living standards and opportunities for many, but there are also legitimate concerns which have created political and social upheaval.**

The Rt Hon George Osborne, chair of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership, has advanced the case that the most effective response to these concerns should be encouraging further localisation, rather than lurching towards nationalism or isolationism. In our first report, published in February, The Northern Powerhouse Partnership identified what more still needs to be done to build a Northern Powerhouse where more people want to live, invest and set up businesses. Amongst these priorities, leadership was identified as a key driver and local leaders will have greater control over more decisions that affect their communities.

It will also be imperative for business to collaborate with the new mayors. The northern business community must work with the public sector, and central Government, to raise the regions collective ambition and voice in front of investors about what can be achieved and delivered in the North. The North should be a magnet

for people looking to invest and grow a business whilst also enjoying an excellent quality of life. Further investment will drive regeneration and benefit all communities.

With more economic power at their fingertips, business should also begin to see real impacts. By challenging where more is still needed to better educate the North's children and invest in the skills of its current workforce, taken together this will hopefully revolutionise the North of England. They will make our shared vision for the next three decades, to be achieved by 2050, one based on concrete strategy and actions.

**The Northern Powerhouse Partnership has a business-led board, including representatives from key companies operating across the North alongside prominent city leaders.**

In partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, the What Works Centre and Centre for Cities we have designed a structured programme of support that we have offered each of the new combined authority mayors. Through this support, and our wider work, we are committed to helping deliver a localisation of power that will further rebalance the UK economy.



# About Portland



Portland is a fully integrated communications consultancy trusted by some of the highest profile organisations, governments and individuals in the world.

We understand integration is key to success and our cross-functional teams bring together public affairs, corporate communications, stakeholder engagement and digital specialists to create integrated communications programmes that deliver a real impact for clients.

Over the past 15 years, we've worked in over 70 countries devising and running national and international campaigns on behalf of some of the world's biggest brands.



# What we do



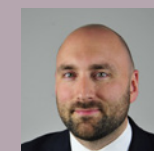
Devolution is creating new centres of power across the country, while local government continues to press for more opportunities to exert influence over business.

Portland's Local team exists to help businesses navigate this agenda - and make the best of the opportunities presented through it.

We enable some of the UK's leading organisations to engage effectively with local and regional decision makers as well as the communities that influence them.

Our expertise ranges from contentious planning applications and major infrastructure projects, through to grassroots campaigning and stakeholder engagement.

From advising on the implications of the devolution agenda to the impact of new models of service provision, our specialists help clients to flourish in this rapidly changing landscape.



If you would like further information about Portland's services and how we can help you, please contact:

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