

**Westminster Social Policy Forum conference:
Next steps for devolution and growth in the North of England**

Timing: Morning, Monday, 17th November 2025

*****Taking place online*****



**WESTMINSTER
SOCIAL POLICY
FORUM**

Draft agenda, subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Assessing key priorities and challenges for growth and coordination in the North of England**
Senior academic
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.25 **Supporting regional growth - developing public sector capacity and investor confidence**
Henri Murison, Chief Executive, Northern Powerhouse Partnership
- 9.35 **Key considerations for devolution, local government reorganisation, planning and improving public service delivery**
priorities for regional public service delivery | implementation of Spatial Development Strategies and planning reform | progress under the Devolution Priority Programme and unitary authority transitions | funding settlements and Fair Funding Review considerations | capacity and governance arrangements, including proposals for a Local Audit Office | right to request and pilot powers | business engagement with combined authorities | partnerships with Homes England and the National Infrastructure Service Transformation Authority | devolved skills commissioning and Adult Skills Fund priorities
Zoë Billingham, Director, IPPR North
Senior representative, combined authority
Senior representative, local authority
Senior representative, legal
Senior representative, skills
- 10.00 Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 **Supporting pan-regional capacity, economic clusters and shared delivery**
Senior representative, combined authority
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.40 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.45 Break
- 10.55 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.00 **Next steps for Northern Powerhouse Rail**
Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive, Transport for the North
- 11.10 **Priorities for improving transport links and supporting interregional connectivity**
delivery of Transport for City Regions funding | integrated local transport systems | Bus Services Bill and next steps for local transport | coordination with Great British Railways | delivery capacity and workforce planning | coordination of housing and transport masterplanning
Jason Syrett, Partner, Allies and Morrison
Senior representative, local authority
Senior representative, transport
- 11.25 Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.40 **Supporting inclusive growth, public service innovation, and net zero ambitions**
Dr Henry Kippin, Chief Executive, North East Mayoral Combined Authority
- 11.50 **Next steps for economic development, regional collaboration, and frameworks for delivering growth and infrastructure**
pan-regional strategy and the role of the Great North partnership | attracting inward investment | reducing regional productivity gaps | Local Growth Plans and integrated settlements | unlocking Industrial Strategy Zone growth | coordination with national delivery bodies, including Homes England and the National Infrastructure Service Transformation Authority | aligning housing, transport, employment and net zero | infrastructure pipelines and Green Book reforms
Sandra Manson, Executive Director, Planning, Pegasus Group; and Chair, Developing Consensus
Senior representative, investment zone
Senior representative, industry
Senior representative, universities
- 12.10 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Implementing proposals in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill and priorities for driving growth in the North of England**
Senior representative, policy
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Social Policy Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Harry Nelson, Westminster Social Policy Forum