



Mapping the terrain: Trade Unions and the Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration

Introduction & Summary

Significant changes are underway in the institutional framework for regional economic development, prompted by the Government's Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (or 'SNR') in 2007 – in ways which have implications for trade unions.

Proposed reforms include:

- a 'more strategic' role for Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), with responsibilities for preparing integrated strategies merging regional economic and spatial strategies
- 'devolution' of funding and responsibilities for the delivery of programmes to local authorities and sub-regional partnerships, with local authorities given a new duty to carry out local economic assessments
- the abolition of Regional Assemblies, with proposals that RDAs be accountable to parliamentary Regional Select Committees and work with regional forums of local authority leaders to agree regional strategies

These shifts are taking place in wider policy context with developments such as:

- the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which gave statutory backing to Local Area Agreements (LAAs) as *the* vehicle for the local public sector, with community and business interests, to align activities and expenditure behind local and national priorities
- duties on local authorities leading to consult and involve local people and organisations
- LSC responsibilities and budget for 14-19 education being transferred to local authorities

While there are many references to 'stakeholder' and especially, 'community' engagement amongst the policy documents, there are no explicit references to trade unions (TUs).

The implications for TUs include:

- **ensure appropriate representation** as key stakeholders in regional planning and decision-making
- **strengthen the collective voice** on the issues that matter most to trade unions in the region – not least on the content of future regional strategies, including major investments, climate change adaptation and regional priorities for public funding

- **'smart' thinking'**: respond to the devolution to local and sub-regional levels by finding creative ways of applying the time and knowledge of trade unionists to influence – both regionally and sub-regionally
- **provide the evidence** that will increasingly be instrumental not only in informing regional and local economic assessments but also shaping plans and how mainstream budgets are spent and services commissioned. There is work to do in raising the profile of needs around occupational health and well-being, equality and diversity, and how Trade Unions help raise workplace productivity and earnings.
- **offer knowledge and experience** in helping local authorities and their partners tackle some of the big issues featuring in LAAs, eg, around worklessness and influencing employer practices
- **understand developments in policies and institutional structures**: where, how and whom to influence

Increasing trade union influence will require concentrating on a few topics which link union interests and where TUs can best support achievement of regional, sub-regional and local objectives and targets.

This briefing seeks to help trade unions develop this influence. The following pages:

- describe the background to the SNR and proposed changes to how regional and local economic development policies will be delivered
- map key organisations and partnerships in the North West
- set out current trade union involvement in these
- provide links to sources of more information about developments at regional and sub-regional level

The Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration

The Government's review of sub-national economic development and regeneration (generally referred to as the 'Sub-National Review' or 'SNR') has focused on how to strengthen economic performance in regions, cities and localities throughout England, while tackling persistent pockets of deprivation. The main [SNR report](#) was published in July 2007, followed by a consultation, '[Prosperous Places](#)', in March-June 2008.

The origins of the Review lay in:

- Government concerns about how to address productivity disparities between and within regions
- local authority lobbying, and wider context of a policy commitment to devolve power from Whitehall
- doubts about the extent to which regeneration and neighbourhood renewal programmes and projects have had a significant and lasting impact on life chances and employment prospects amongst disadvantaged communities
- a desire for simplification (joining up policy making at national, regional, sub-regional and local levels, and reducing the number of strategies and bodies)
- a belief that strategies - and subsequent delivery - can be strengthened through a greater sense of ownership of these strategies by organisations at all levels: local, sub-regional, regional and within Whitehall

The SNR was based upon the principles of managing policy 'at the right spatial level', ensuring clarity of objectives, and enabling 'places' – cities, towns and rural areas - to reach their potential. Its final report outlined the Government's plans to "*refocus both powers and responsibilities below the national level to support its objectives to encourage economic growth and tackle deprivation at every level*", by:

- strengthening powers for local authorities to promote economic development neighbourhood renewal
- supporting local authorities to work together at the sub-regional level
- strengthening the regional tier of institutions and governance
- reforming central government's relations with regions and localities

The Departments of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and Communities and Local Government (CLG) are jointly responsible for taking forward the Review's recommendations.

Main SNR consultation proposals

The consultation, '[Prosperous Places](#)' set out the Government's proposals for reforming sub-national economic development and regeneration. These included:

1) Streamlining regional governance

- introducing *integrated* strategies, bringing together separate requirements for regional economic and spatial planning strategies

- giving RDAs lead responsibility for regional spatial planning - for guiding where new development happens in the region - and for advising government on priorities for regional public spending through Regional Funding Allocations
- abolishing Regional Assemblies (to be phased out from 2010)

The New Regional Strategies

The new regional strategies are intended to bring together Regional Economic Strategies and Regional Spatial Strategies, providing a vision for *“how and where sustainable economic growth would be delivered”*. These would include social and environmental objectives as well as a regional economic growth objective..

The process of producing these plans would be streamlined, to be completed within a two-year timescale. This will require a robust evidence base, effective engagement with stakeholders and the public, and a sustainability appraisal. Plans should be subject to independent testing in public. The reduced timescale should be facilitated by greater clarity on policy expectations from Whitehall.

It is envisaged that the strategy document will cover:

- key economic challenges
- how economic growth can best be delivered
- distribution of housing supply
- adapting to climate change
- priorities for regeneration intervention
- infrastructure requirements

Strategies are to be signed off jointly by the RDA, local authority leaders and Ministers. These should serve to steer investment by public bodies. Delivery plans are also proposed, setting out what partners are going to do.

Regional Funding Allocations

Regional Funding Allocations (RFA) were introduced as a process in 2005/06 where regional partners were invited by the Government to produce advice on regional priorities within agreed levels of central government expenditure.

The [initial RFA](#) covered transport, housing and economic development budgets in the region (a combined total of £1.3bn over 10 years). As part of the SNR, this exercise is to be repeated in 2008/09, with a wider scope including further transport streams; European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); housing and regeneration delivery in growth areas; and the new Homes and Communities Agency.

The [new RFA](#) will not only seek advice on regional priorities, but also recommendations for how money might be moved between funding streams. The RFA will not include the adult skills budget directly but the Government wishes that the LSC, RDAs, local authorities and other partners will develop an agreed view on skills and training priorities that best support regional and local priorities.

Ministers will provide a formal response in summer 2009 setting out how the advice from the regions will inform Departmental spending plans. This will set the public sector investment context for the new regional strategies and delivery plans.

2) Ensuring public accountability at regional level

The Government proposes that public accountability at regional level will work in future through:

- Ministers for the regions to give a “sense of leadership in each region and to give citizens a voice in government, ensuring government policy takes account of regional needs”
- Regional Select Committees
- regional Local Authority Leaders’ Forum (role: to sign off the single regional strategy and help to hold the RDA and partners to account)

Ministers for the Regions & Regional Select Committees

Ministers for the Regions

Ministers for the Regions have been in place since 2007. Their purpose is “to provide strategic direction for their region. Regional Ministers give citizens a voice in central government, ensuring that government policy takes account of the differing needs of the nine English regions. They will also make central government more visible in the regions, helping to raise its profile and generate awareness of the political system.” Their remit includes:

- advising on the approval of regional strategies and appointment of RDA Chairs and Boards
- representing regional interests in government policy-making
- facilitating a joined-up approach across departments and agencies to enable the delivery of the single regional strategy
- championing the region at high level events and on high profile projects
- representing the Government at regional select committees and in parliamentary debates focused on the region

Regional Select Committees

The Government asked Parliament to consider establishing regional select committees, on the grounds that Regional Ministers should be accountable to Parliament, as should be those parts of government responsible for the delivery of regional policies. The [House of Commons Modernisation Committee](#) has now recommended their establishment.

3) RDA ‘strategic economic leadership’ role

- RDAs will be expected to provide ‘strategic economic leadership’ for their region and continue to be business-led
- RDAs will be expected to ensure the effective engagement of “stakeholders, business and citizens”
- an independent panel is also proposed in each region to facilitate stakeholder engagement in regional strategies, once the RDA, working with the Leaders’ Forum, has identified the issues to be tested and possible options before finalising priorities and actions

4) Local and regional roles in economic development

- The local authority role in economic development will be strengthened, with a new statutory duty to assess local economic conditions. (Such assessments

would include consideration of employment and skills needs, and the infrastructure required to support economic growth including housing and transport investment.)

- RDAs will be expected to:
 - continue to manage services “*best implemented at regional level*”, working with a range of delivery organisations and working closely with the private sector. These services include co-ordination of inward investment, business support, promotion of innovation and responding to ‘economic shocks’ (eg, major closures and large scale redundancies)
 - delegate funding to local authorities, where appropriate, and provide support to develop capacity at local and sub-regional levels
- the SNR consultation also proposes supporting collaboration by local authorities across economic areas, with statutory backing for sub-regional partnerships where arrangements are cost-effective and provide accountability to local people

TUC responses to the Sub-National Review

The TUC in its [response to the Sub-National Review](#) welcomed the proposals for greater policy co-ordination at regional level and argued for a greater role for regional stakeholders, including trade unions, alongside local authorities.

It noted likely barriers in the capacity of local authorities to engage with the business community, including unions and called for institutions which facilitate social partnership in the workplace and at sub-regional level as a route to improved productivity.

The TUC also recommended that regional strategies should include sustainable development, recognition of the impact of inequalities in access to housing and transport and seek to address discrimination and segregation in the labour market. It further advocated that local economic assessments should take account of the level of trade union membership and coverage of collective bargaining in key sectors.

The NW TUC’s own response also emphasised the need for stakeholder, including union, representation and set out the case for TU contributions to addressing key regional – and sub-regional – challenges in relation to equality and diversity, mental health and climate change, over and above the difference TUs can make to workplace productivity.

The wider policy context for the Sub-National Review

A) Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has already brought about reforms at the local level that relate to the SNR. This provides a framework (set out in statutory guidance, [Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities](#)) for better delivery of local public services and the achievement of priorities agreed by local partners and central government.

Key features of this framework are:

- the starting point for delivering better outcomes is for local partners, in the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), to create a shared vision and sense of priorities for their area. This is set out in a Sustainable Community Strategy, a plan describing how people who live and work there want it to change over time.
- a 'duty to involve' requiring local authorities to ensure that local people have greater opportunities to influence decision making
- new Local Area Agreements (LAAs), as a mechanism for implementing the Sustainable Community Strategy and setting out the 'deal' between central government and local authorities and their partners for funding and performance targets. LAAs cover three financial years and are intended to be the *only* vehicles for agreeing targets between local and central government
- a 'duty to cooperate' placed on named public agencies in agreeing and working towards LAA targets
- an emphasis on joint commissioning of services and programmes, rather than project-by-project grant funding

Unison have published a [briefing for activists](#) on the Act and a guide, '[Make Local Services Count](#)'. Unison has concerns about possible implications for staff (eg, as a consequence of partners pooling budgets and undertaking joint commissioning of services), the treatment of equality within LAAs, and the public accountability of LSPs.

Local Area Agreements

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) sets out priorities and targets for a local area for a three year period, negotiated between local partners (represented by the local authority and other key partners through the Local Strategic Partnership - LSP) and central government (represented by the Government Office for their region). The purpose is to help deliver better outcomes for local people through improved co-ordination and partnership added value, and to serve as *the* place for agreeing targets between local government and their delivery partners and central government

A new round of LAAs is being negotiated, with the starting point being a narrative about local needs and opportunities (the so-called 'story of place'), leading to debate over priorities and a process of negotiating indicators and targets for inclusion in the LAA, to be agreed with Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. LAAs involve streamlined funding (through 'Area Based Grant') and financial reward for overall success in achieving the targets.

A menu of 198 National Indicators was devised to form the basis for local partners and Government to agree up to 35 targets in each LAA. These include several of concern to trade unions including:

employment

- overall employment rate (ie, % of the working age population in a job or self-employed)
- working age people on out of work benefits
- people falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits Y
- 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
- take-up of formal childcare by low-income working families

skills & earnings

- learners achieving qualifications in literacy and in numeracy
- working age population qualified to at least Level 2/ 3/ 4 or higher
- average earnings of employees in the area
- English language skills of migrants

business

- business VAT registrations and proportion showing growth
- skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers

sustainability/ transport

- adapting to climate change/ reducing CO² emissions
- congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak
- working age people with access to employment by public transport

equalities

- fair treatment by local services

Typically, negotiation of the LAA priorities is leading to reconsideration of how funds are allocated and LSPs structured – as well as LAAs developing a higher profile in the eyes of local politicians.

For background information, see, [Development of the new LAA framework - Operational Guidance](#) (CLG, 2007). Communities and Local Government has published a series of [briefings](#) on the implications of LAAs for particular fields, eg, climate change, health, and transport.

Duties to consult and involve

Unitary and county councils have been given the responsibility for leading LAA development, and are expected to “consult such other persons as appear to it to be appropriate”. The scope is expected “to be inclusive of all bodies that could meaningfully contribute to the preparation and attainment of LAA targets”, which can include trade unions.

This duty to consult in the preparation of LAAs is already in place, and from April 2009, a further duty on local authorities will come into force: the ‘Duty to involve’. Under this, local authorities will be expected to “take those steps they consider appropriate to involve representatives of local persons in the exercise of any of their functions” where those ‘local persons’ are likely to be affected by, or interested in, a particular authority function. ‘Involvement’ may take many forms, with the guidance mentioning consultation and the provision of information along with “involving in another way”. “Local persons” is not simply a reference to local residents but can again include trade unions.

Multi-Area Agreements

Multi-Area Agreements are a further development of LAAs, established as voluntary agreements between two or more county or unitary councils, their partners and Government to achieve shared targets to improve economic prosperity.

The thinking is that such agreements should allow groups of partners to respond to challenges more effectively than they could on their own, for example around large-scale infrastructure projects. Government would expect local partnerships to explore the potential for sub-regional partnerships to help lever in private sector funding and as a route for innovative funding mechanisms to address such challenges.

MAAs are expected to build on existing sub-regional partnerships, and include representation from “businesses and other key stakeholders”. The principles were set out in the SNR, with further detail provided in CLG’s [Operational Guidance for LAAs](#). The Departments of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) have made a commitment to work through MAAs as their preferred means of devolving responsibilities and funding, provided that there are robust partnership and delivery arrangements and strong employer representation.

Working Neighbourhoods Fund

LAA budgets include the [Working Neighbourhoods Fund](#) (WNF) in those areas with the highest levels of deprivation to tackle worklessness and low levels of skills and enterprise. The intention for WNF is to address root causes of deprivation and add value to existing mainstream programmes (eg, in relation to targeting specific groups; providing once in employment; and overcoming health barriers).

There is great freedom for local partners to use this funding in ways they see fit, and there is minimal Government guidance. However, there are expectations that:

- there should be bottom-up pressure to improve services: *“All the community will need to be involved if we are to get those that are able to work into work. Peer support and peer pressure will need to underpin innovative approaches to getting people into work.”*
- local authorities need to work with public and private employers to identify recruitment needs, and how those needs can be met by local people – where necessary tackling employer discrimination against some groups and the residents of deprived areas;

The WNF will incorporate DWP City Strategy funding from 2009/10. The purpose of City Strategy, launched in 2007, is to test a new bottom-up approach to joining up the delivery of employment and skills policies, including devolving some decisions and funding to local levels. It concentrates on metropolitan areas including Liverpool and Manchester.

Regional Improvement & Efficiency Partnerships

Improvements in performance by local authorities and local partners to be supported primarily through the new Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs). These bring together a number of capacity building funding streams for improving performance, developing skills and realising efficiencies in local government. They provide a range of programmes, eg, for leadership development and business process improvement, and increasingly focus their work on helping to ensure that LAAs are successfully implemented. They are therefore of interest to all LAA partners – as well as to public sector unions with interests in workforce development and the contribution of frontline staff to service improvement.

RDAs are also expected to help develop capacity for delivery at local and sub-regional levels.

The SNR and local government

Many of the reforms lobbied for by local government have come to pass in the recommendations of the SNR.

For more on local government views on taking forward the SNR, see [‘Prosperous communities III - en attendant la dévolution’](#)

For LGA thinking and examples of emerging MAA models, see [Pushing back the frontiers: the multi-area agreement pioneers](#)

B) Related policy developments

Alongside the Sub-National Review, other policy developments are having an impact on regional, sub-regional and local policies for economic development and employment. These include:

- under the [current legislative programme](#)
 - Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill (which includes proposals to merge the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships to form the [Homes and Communities Agency](#))
 - Education and Skills Bill (see below)
 - Equality Bill (requiring public bodies to consider the diverse needs and requirements of their workforce, and the communities they serve, when developing employment policies and when planning services)
 - Welfare Reform Bill (implementing reforms set out in the White Paper, [‘Opportunity, Employment and Progression: making skills work’](#))
- [Innovation Nation](#) White Paper – includes roles for RDAs in promoting innovation, working with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Science ([DIUS](#)) and the [Technology Strategy Board](#) to develop better understanding of patterns of innovation at different spatial levels, and ensuring that LAs include innovation in their local economic assessments.
- implementation of the [Leitch Review of Skills](#), including:
 - establishment of [UK Commission on Employment and Skills](#), charged with improving employment and skills policy and delivery through a stronger business voice, strategic policy development, evidence-based analysis and the exchange of good practice
 - a continued role for [Sector Skills Councils](#) (including a regional presence)
 - establishment of sub-regional Employment and Skills Boards
 - changes in funding and planning responsibilities set out in the [Raising Expectations: Enabling the System to Deliver](#) White Paper, notably with LSC responsibilities and budget for 14-19 education being transferred to local authorities (expected to collaborate on a *sub-regional basis* for planning and commissioning) and the creation of a new Skills Funding Agency to fund training and skills for adults (see also the [TUC submission on the White Paper](#) and for further comments on skills policy ‘After Leitch’ see [TUC submission to the Select Committee Inquiry](#))

- the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#), with its core function of enabling people to achieve social change and ensure that organisations (including RDAs, local authorities and employers) meet their legal and moral responsibilities under equalities and human rights legislation

Implications for Trade Unions

The implications for trade unions include:

- **ensure appropriate representation** as key stakeholders in regional planning and decision-making
- **strengthen the collective voice** on the issues that matter most to trade unions – not least on the content of future regional strategies, including major investments, climate change adaptation and regional priorities for public funding
- **‘smart’ thinking**: respond to the devolution to local and sub-regional levels in finding creative ways of applying the time and knowledge of trade unionists to influence – both regionally and sub-regionally
- **provide the evidence** that will increasingly be instrumental not only in informing regional and local economic assessments but also shaping plans and how mainstream budgets are spent and services commissioned. There is work to do in raising the profile of needs around occupational health and well-being, equality and diversity, and how Trade Unions help raise workplace productivity and earnings.
- **offer knowledge and experience** in helping local authorities, local and sub-regional partnerships partners tackle some of the big issues featuring in LAAs, eg, around worklessness
- **understand developments in institutional structures**: where, how and whom to influence

Increasing trade union influence will require concentrating on a few topics which link union interests and where TUs can best support achievement of regional, sub-regional and local objectives and targets.

The [TUC's position](#) is that that there must be a role for the trade union movement in holding regional bodies to account and participating in the development of communities at all levels. A suggestion made is to require the specific inclusion of trade unions in the development of Local Area Agreements. The Government and the Local Government Association, however, appear reluctant to name specific interests (other than the requirement on named public agencies to co-operate in implementing LAAs). Trade unions will need to raise their profile in the eyes of local authorities and make the case for more active participation in LAAs and MAAs where unions can help achievement of relevant priorities and targets.

Mapping the ground in the North West & key changes

Regional level

Minister for the North West – Beverley Hughes

Priorities: reducing health inequalities, reducing worklessness and building local capacity, especially in the context of the Sub-National Review

Further information: [Government Office for the North West](#) website, and the Minister's [newsletter](#)

Select Committee for the North West

Recommended by the [House of Commons Modernisation Committee](#)

Government Office North West

The role of the [Government Office for the North West](#) (one of nine Government Offices for the Regions - GORs) is to:

- support for Regional Minister
- influence and explain national policy
- be 'eyes and ears of Whitehall'
- provide regional representation for 10 Government departments
- help join up departmental policies
- manage the performance of delivery agencies, including NWDA
- promote sharing of knowledge and best practice across partners/delivery agents

North West Development Agency

[North West Development Agency](#) (NWDA) is one of nine regional development agencies (RDAs). All RDAs aim to co-ordinate economic development and regeneration, enable regions to improve their relative competitiveness and reduce the imbalance within and between regions. They have five statutory purposes: to further economic development and regeneration; to promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness; to promote employment; enhance development and application of skills relevant to employment; and to contribute to sustainable development.

Each RDA has had the task of producing a Regional Economic Strategy (RES), reviewed every three years. This is intended as the economic strategy for the region, rather than simply the strategy for the RDA.

The current [North West RES](#) revolves around three overarching goals or 'drivers':

- "improving productivity and market growth"
 - increasing the number of higher added value jobs in the region, as well as retaining existing high-value jobs through investment in innovation, research and leadership.

- “growing the size and capability of the workforce”
 - getting more people into work, especially in the region’s most deprived areas, among its most disadvantaged communities and areas remote from growth.
- “creating the right conditions for sustainable growth and private sector investment”
 - through investing in the region’s environment, culture, infrastructure and communities.

The [NWDA Corporate Plan](#) sets out how it will address these priorities.

NWDA is currently structured around:

- Enterprise and Skills (responsible for enterprise and innovation policy, growth sectors, university/ business collaborations, Business Link services for small business, and attracting new overseas investments)
- Development (responsible for developing and assessing regeneration and development projects, broadening the rural economy of the region, and leading on sustainable development and climate change issues, planning and housing)
- Marketing and Communications (responsible for promoting the region as well as NWDA itself)
- Tourism (responsible for leading work to expand tourism and the visitor economy, working through five sub-regional tourist boards)

NWDA also has Policy, Resources, and Human Performance divisions, and houses the [North West Regional Intelligence Unit](#) (NWRIU), whose role is to collect, analyse and disseminate regional information through the Internet and publications.

Within the skills programme, NWDA (with the LSC) support the [Learning and Skills for All Fund](#), managed by Unionlearn in the North West, set up to help unions develop local learning and skills projects. NWDA also funds the NW TUC Policy Officer post working in support of the RES, eg, through involvement in the North West manufacturing strategy, promoting union engagement with employers on environmental issues, and developing union-led initiatives with employers to demonstrate productivity gains..

The [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF) in the region is aligned to the RES and is administered by the NWDA through its European Programme Team. Over the period 2007-13, the region will receive a total of £521m, of which £212m is a ring-fenced for Merseyside. Funding under the current Operational Programme works through 11 [‘Action Areas’](#), each with an ‘Investment Framework’ that details the types of activity to be funded and the types of organisations best placed to deliver these.

NWDA has also sponsored a range of **sectoral initiatives** in which trade unions have an interest. These include:

- [Northwest Aerospace Alliance](#)
- [Northwest Automotive Alliance](#)
- [Chemicals Northwest](#)
- [NW Texnet](#) (advanced flexible materials)
- [Bionow](#) (biotechnology)

- [Envirolink Northwest](#) (energy and environmental technologies and services)
- [Food North West](#)

Digital and creative industries are also a priority, and subject of [development work](#) linked to a national initiative.

NWDA also looks to five **sub-regional partnerships** (SRPs) to support the delivery of the Regional Economic Strategy, typically concerning:

- developing key sectors and promoting R&D
- linking workless people to vacancies
- stimulating economic activity in areas remote from growth;
- improving transport connections
- developing the quality of the 'visitor experience' (for tourists and business visitors)
- improving the physical environment

Sub-Regional Action Plans (SRAPs) were introduced in 2006 as a means of co-ordinating partner activities and channelling NWDA funding. [Relationships between SRPs and NWDA](#) were reviewed by NWRA in 2007.

NWDA are partners in [The Northern Way](#) which brings together the cities and regions of the North of England to work together to improve the sustainable economic development of the North towards the level of more prosperous regions. There is a joint strategy, focusing on eight city regions including Central Lancashire, Liverpool and Manchester.

4NW

[4NW](#) is the Regional Leaders Forum for the North West which has replaced the North West Regional Assembly. It presents its aim as to "ensure that things that are important to the North West are defined and agreed by people in the North West". Partners have moved faster than in other regions to set up this body, in advance of legislation.

4NW is operating with a board structure, with council leaders from each of the five sub-regions (Cumbria, Cheshire, Lancashire, Merseyside and Manchester), along with seven representatives from other sectors including the NW TUC.

4 NW will play a full part in the development of the Single Regional Strategy (SRS), working with NWDA and channelling detailed local authority inputs. This will set out what the region needs in terms of transport, skills training, economic development, housing, spatial planning and other improvements, effectively tying together economic development and spatial planning priorities. 4NW will continue to act as Regional Planning Body and Housing Board for the time being.

The new body will also provide services in support of its role in representing and supporting local authorities at regional level (eg, the Improvement and Efficiency Partnership – see below). It also expects to serve as a natural focus for regional activity in areas such as promoting the equalities agenda, tackling worklessness, climate change, and improving neighbourhoods and health. It will relate to a variety of regional partnerships previously sponsored by the Regional Assembly including the [North West Sustainable Development Group](#) and the North West Equality and

Diversity Group. There is also the [North West Climate Change Partnership](#) responsible for the regional Climate Change Action Plan which has been endorsed by NW TUC.

A separate group will be established to carry out scrutiny of 4NW's own activities and the work of the NWDA.

North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership

The [North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership](#) (NWIEP) formed in 2008 to support improvement within local authorities and their partners in LAAs. NWIEP has a priority for tackling the SNR agenda, and a significant proportion of the NWIEP budget is allocated through sub-regional improvement partnerships where resources may go into MAA development.

Public agencies in the North West

- [Housing Corporation](#) and [English Partnerships](#) are being merged to form the Homes and Communities Agency. (This will have a regional office – currently the North West is covered as part of larger regions). Roles will include supporting local authorities in improving housing and transforming deprived communities, bringing old industrial sites into use and developing strategic sites, and ensuring 'decent homes' standards in social housing
- [Learning and Skills Council](#) plans funding of post-16 education and training, including further education and sixth form colleges, work-based training and adult and community learning. A new LSC Regional Council for the North West will be in place from September 2008. Its role is to inform the LSC's decision making at the regional level, guide progress and make sure the Government's strategy for education and skills works on the ground. (This is prior the LSC being replaced by two bodies, for young people's and adult skills - with the largest part of the LSC budget going to local authorities for training programmes for young people.)
- [Jobcentre Plus](#) is the delivery agency for welfare-to-work programmes, reporting to the Department of Work and Pensions. There is a regional office, responsible for contracting and partnership work, eg, through the NWRSP. With the LSC, they are responsible for the administration of the [European Social Fund](#) in the region.
- LSC and Jobcentre Plus have jointly promoted the formation of Employer Coalitions in [Greater Manchester](#) and [Merseyside](#) to ensure that employers can make a strategic input to shaping the supply of employment and skills provision

North West Skills and Employment Board

The North West Skills and Employment Board was formed in 2008 to determine priorities for high level policy and a delivery framework for the region's skills and employment needs. It has replaced the North West Regional Skills Partnership which was one of nine regional skills partnerships, introduced by the Skills White Paper in 2003 to reinforce the connection between skills, employment and productivity. It has similar functions, but is intended to have more influence and impact. There is added emphasis on integrating service delivery to achieve greater impact. It brings together

employers, NWDA, LSC, Jobcentre Plus, local authorities and other bodies including the NW TUC.

There is also related sectoral partnership, the [North West Health and Social Care Sector Skills and Productivity Alliance](#) which involves relevant national sector skills councils and regional partners.

Local level

Local authorities

There are 46 local authorities¹ of which 23 are unitary or county authorities responsible for Local Area Agreements (LAAs).

Almost all LAs have staff with economic development functions, though not necessarily 'economic development officers' and 'economic development units' as such. Numbers of staff involved are small in relation to total employment in each council.

Sometimes the responsibility rests within planning/ environment departments, sometimes within corporate policy units. A few authorities have set up arms length companies for economic development purposes, eg, the [Rochdale Development Agency](#).

Economic development services vary by area, but typically include some mix of:

- co-ordinating the council's approach to economic well-being
- attracting business investment and public funding
- managing EU and other externally funding programmes and projects
- lobbying to improve strategic infrastructure
- promoting the area as an attractive place to live, work and invest
- raising the area's profile regionally, nationally and internationally
- supporting local enterprise and 'access to jobs' initiatives
- providing a 'business-friendly' face for the authority
- improving the supply of business land and premises

Other activities may include, eg, working with the police to reduce crime against business, or with the Primary Care Trust on workplace health or employment projects for people with disabilities or mental health conditions.

Capacity for good quality economic intelligence varies considerably across LAs, and this will have implications for carrying out the new local economic assessment duty. Current examples of local economic assessments do not always fully reflect the range of workplace issues of concern to trade unions, including health, working conditions and training.

¹ 41 from April 2009 following the creation of two new unitaries in Cheshire: Cheshire West (Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston and Vale Royal) and Cheshire East (Macclesfield, Crewe & Nantwich and Congleton)

Local Strategic Partnerships

Each local authority (46) has a responsibility for convening a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and producing a Sustainable Community Strategy. LSPs typically have economic theme groups, a few of which have trade union involvement. Many LSPs find engaging the private sector difficult, and have had agendas largely dominated by public sector concerns.

Local Area Agreements

The 23 LAAs will be agreed with Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by the end of June 2008. These LAAs will attract Area Based Grant of £534m in 2008/09, of which 36% goes to Greater Manchester and 30% to Merseyside.

Of the 'top ten' indicators given priority in the regions LAAs are:

- working age people claiming out of work benefits (top, included in 21 out of 23 LAAs)
- 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (third equal, with 19 LAAs)
- proportion of the working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher (third equal, with 19 LAAs)

'Worklessness' is thus the top theme across the LAAs, with LAA partners increasingly interested in what they can do locally to help disadvantaged people enter – and stay in – employment, not least in ways which require partnership action, eg, in improving access to childcare, helping people with health conditions back to work, and tackling discrimination in the labour market.

Sub-regional level

Sub-Regional Partnerships

Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance

www.cwea.org.uk/

Cumbria Vision

www.cumbriavision.co.uk/

Manchester Enterprises

www.manchester-enterprises.com/

Under development: a Strategic Commission for Economic Development, Employment and Skills under the auspices of AGMA (Association of Greater Manchester Authorities). This would replace the current GME board.

http://www.agma.gov.uk/ccm/agma/AGMA_Initiatives/governance.en

A Business Leadership Forum is also proposed to advise AGMA of business perspectives and conduct its own reviews on issues affecting the economic well-being of the city region.

Lancashire Economic Partnership

www.lancashire-ep.org.uk/

(which has responsibility for developing the [Central Lancashire City Region Development Programme](#) – covering 12 out of 14 local authority areas, from Blackpool to Blackburn)

The Mersey Partnership
www.merseyside.org.uk/

Multi-Area Agreements

Four out of the first 13 MAAs to be given the green light for development by CLG are in the North West, with one, *Greater Manchester*, given the go ahead in July 2008

- Greater Manchester: Bolton, Bury, Manchester City Council, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan (led by Greater Manchester Enterprises) – [Greater Manchester Multi-Area Agreement](#)
- Liverpool City Region: Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, St Helens, Wirral and Halton (based on the ‘Action Plan for the Liverpool City Region’ produced through The Mersey Partnership)
 - focusing on economic development, skills, employment and transport (see [Liverpool City Region - A Prospectus – April 2008](#))
- Fylde Coast: Blackpool, Lancashire, Fylde and Wyre –
 - focusing on economic development and tourism, planning and transport, housing, climate change and culture and leisure
- Pennine Lancashire: Blackburn, Lancashire and Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley
 - focusing on the economy, housing, worklessness, sustainable development and transport

Sub-regional Employment & Skills Boards

Cheshire & Warrington Employment and Skills Board (part of Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance)

www.cwea.org.uk/new-employment-skills-board-cheshire-warrington

Cumbria Employment and Skills Board (part of Cumbria Vision) – *under development*

www.cumbriavision.co.uk/default.asp?l1=1

Greater Manchester Employment and Skills Board

subject to changed arrangements with the establishment of the new Strategic Commission for Economic Development, Skills and Employment. It is proposed that the Greater Manchester Employer Coalition will be at part of this, and that GMEC staff will co-locate with the Commission.

Lancashire Employment and Skills Board (Lancashire Economic Partnership)
under development

City-Region Employment and Skills Board

under development, based on the current City Strategy board, and likely to be responsible for the MAA as well (note: separate body to the Mersey Partnership)

Other government-supported bodies – (a) Urban regeneration companies (URCs)

New East Manchester

www.neweastmanchester.com/

West Lakes Renaissance (Furness and Cumbria)

www.westlakesrenaissance.co.uk/

ReBlackpool

www.reblackpool.com/reblackpool/default.aspx

Central Salford

www.centralsalford.com/

Liverpool Vision

www.liverpoolvision.co.uk/

Liverpool Vision has recently brought together the activities of three development bodies - Liverpool Vision (URC), Liverpool Land Development Company and Business Liverpool.

Other NWDA-sponsored

Carlisle Renaissance

<http://www.nwda.co.uk/news—events/press-releases/200801/new-carlisle-renaissance-board.aspx>

(chair and board appointment 08/05/08)

Pennine Lancashire Development Company *Under development:*

Other government-supported bodies - Science & innovation-related

Manchester Knowledge Capital

www.manchesterknowledge.com/default.asp

(includes Manchester Science City - part of the DIUS Science City programme)

www.manchesterknowledge.com/page.asp?id=2650

Local (LAA areas in bold)

Merseyside

Knowsley

www.theknowsleypartnership.org.uk/

Liverpool First

www.liverpoolfirst.org.uk/

Sefton

<http://sbp.sefton.gov.uk/>

St Helens

www.sthelenstogether.org.uk/profile.html

Wirral (LAA Programme Board; no site for LSP)

www.wirral.gov.uk/minute/meetinglist.asp?cttee=Local+Area+Agreement+Programme+Board+%28not+a+public+meeting%29

Greater Manchester

Bolton

www.boltonvision.org.uk/

Bury (Team Bury)

www.bury.gov.uk/CouncilGovernmentAndDemocracy/Councils/Partnerships/default.asp

Manchester

www.manchesterpartnership.org.uk/

Oldham

www.oldhampartnership.org.uk/

Rochdale (Pride Partnership)

www.pridepartnership.co.uk/

Salford

www.partnersinsalford.org/

Stockport

www.stockport.gov.uk/atozindex/lsp?a=5441

Tameside

www.tameside-strategic-partnership.org.uk/

Trafford

www.traffordpartnership.org/Intro.asp

Wigan

www.wigan.gov.uk/Services/CommunityLiving/Partnerships/WBPB/

Cheshire

Halton

www.haltonpartnership.net/site/

Warrington

www.warrington.gov.uk/lsp/default.asp?pageindex=10

Cheshire (county) - Communities of Cheshire Partnership

www.cpfamework.org.uk/CheshireLAA.htm

Ellesmere Port & Neston

www.epnbc.gov.uk/community/LSP.htm

Chester (Chester in Partnership)

www.chester.gov.uk/community_and_living/your_community/community_planning.aspx

Congleton

www.congleton.gov.uk/default.asp?t=236

Crewe & Nantwich

www.cnlsp.org.uk/

Macclesfield

www.macclesfield.gov.uk/standardpage.asp?pageid=10308

Vale Royal

www.valeroyalisp.org/

Lancashire

Blackburn with Darwen

www.bwdlsp.org.uk/

Blackpool

www.blackpool4me.com/Blackpool4Me/Community/Future/BlackpoolLSP/

Lancashire Partnership (county)

www.lancashirepartnership.co.uk/

Burnley

www.burnleyactionpartnership.com

Chorley

www.chorley.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174

Fylde

www.fylde.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/community-people-and-living/fylde-local-strategic-partnership/

Hyndburn

www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=10010&documentID=290

Lancaster

www.lancaster.gov.uk/Category.asp?cat=785

Pendle

www.pendlepartnership.co.uk

Preston

www.prestonstrategicpartnership.org.uk/

Ribble Valley

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=93&documentID=718

Rossendale

www.rossendalealive.co.uk/site/index.php

South Ribble

www.southribble.gov.uk/about_the_council/partners_srp.asp

West Lancashire

www.westlancsdc.gov.uk/YourCouncil/index.cfm?ccs=431

Wyre

www.mywyre.co.uk/wsp/

Cumbria

Cumbria (county)

www.cumbriastrategicpartnership.org.uk/

West Cumbria (covering Allerdale & Copeland DC areas)

www.westcumbrialive.com/

Furness Partnership (Barrow)

www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=946

Carlisle

www.carlisle.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/partnerships/carlisle_partnership.aspx

South Lakeland

www.southlakelandlsp.org.uk/

Eden

www.eden.gov.uk/main.asp?page=2228

Where and how are TUs currently involved?

Regional level

NWDA

Dave McCall – Regional Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union

On NWDA board and on NWDA committees:

- Quality and Diversity Sub Committee (Chair)
- Remuneration & Appointments Committee (Vice Chair)
- Audit Committee
- Sub-Regional Strategic Liaison Committee

Alan Manning – Regional Secretary

- ERDF Programme Monitoring Committee

4NW - Regional Leaders Forum

Alan Manning

North West Employment and Skills Board

Alan Manning

LSC Regional Council

Ray Short, Unison

Sub-regional level

Cheshire & Warrington Economic Alliance - Skills Board

Dave Eva - unionlearn Regional Manager

Liverpool City Strategy Board

Dave Eva

Greater Manchester Strategic Commission for Economic Development, Skills and Enterprise

Dave Eva

Glossary

4nw	the leaders forum for the North West
BERR	Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
CLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DIUS	Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MAA	Multi-Area Agreement
NWDA	North West Development Agency
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RES	Regional Economic Strategy
RFA	Regional Funding Allocation
RIEP	Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership
SNR	Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration
SRS	Single Regional Strategy
WNF	Working Neighbourhoods Fund