



Department for
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From the Secretary of State

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Mr Keith,

Thank you for the letter of 23 December from yourself and Ian Macdonald about the proposals to establish a Statutory City Region for Greater Manchester.

I am indeed aware of the discussions which have been taking place between central Government, with the Treasury leading, and the Manchester City Region, leading to the agreement which Phil Woolas signed on behalf of the central Government at the meeting of the AGMA Executive on 18 December.

I am happy to confirm that, as is stated in that agreement, the Government is committed to the Manchester City Region assuming responsibilities and influence comparable to that which TfL enjoys, provided that the City Region for its part puts in place the robust governance arrangements necessary to support this.

The 18 December agreement summarises the mechanisms, in relation to both heavy rail and highways, through which the role, responsibilities and influence of the City Region will be enhanced. Officials here are working with Greater Manchester officers to develop as a matter of high priority, the detailed protocols to which we are committed, and this work is going well.

I am clear that the arrangements which the Government and the AGMA Leadership are together putting in place will result in the Manchester City Region having, in relation to both road and rail, a degree of involvement, knowledge, capability and influence, and thereby power, which is a step change greater than that which is currently enjoyed by the City Region, or

indeed by any other city outside London. In this case Manchester has the potential to be the pathfinder.

In parallel, I know that the City Region is pressing ahead on the governance reforms which are needed to strengthen integration between transport, land-use and economic regeneration strategies and decisions, and to enable the City Region to take full advantage of the stronger role which is on offer – with the opportunity for the new Joint Committee to play a substantial part in this strengthened role.

I am committed to securing such a package of reforms because I am confident that taken as a whole, it will deliver for Greater Manchester and that this is crucial for achieving the full economic and social potential of Greater Manchester, to the benefit of both the people of the area and the nation as a whole.

Finally, I should say that I see this package as a starting point for even further reform, involving greater devolution of funding decisions – again, depending on the City Region having in place sufficiently robust governance arrangements.

Yours ever,

Andrew.

ANDREW ADONIS