

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State Communities and Local Government

Lord Jim O'Neill,
Commercial Secretary (HM Treasury)

**c/o Department for Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF**

**1 Belle Vue Square
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North Yorkshire
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10 February 2016

Dear Secretary of State and Minister

We write to you in our capacity as Leaders of Craven District Council and Harrogate Borough Council with regard to the current devolution position as it affects the geography of our respective local authority areas.

We have been party to discussions locally with regard to both the Leeds City Region (LCR) and York, North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) devolution proposals, and it is our understanding from recent discussions with the West Yorkshire local authority leaders that we have now reached the point where our two councils need to consider membership options of the Combined Authority (CA).

Should a devolution deal for the LCR be concluded shortly, we would wish ahead of that deal to express our clear desire for our respective councils to have the option to pursue full (constituent) membership of the LCR with a corresponding transfer of transport powers for our areas to the Combined Authority (and Mayor). We are keen to have the option to join the LCR as full members, but recognise that our economic collaboration can only be truly effective if the CA (and Mayor) have responsibility for the transport functions across the whole of the LCR geography. In our view, this provides the best opportunity to improve the economic outcomes for our respective communities.

We acknowledge that, due to a number of legal hurdles, it would not be possible to achieve this by 2017, and that non-constituent (associate) member status would be a necessary interim position. However, we would wish to present to our councils a clear route map within the devolution agreement, as to how full membership of the LCR CA with a transfer of transport powers to the CA can be achieved with the clear support of the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Treasury.



Paul Shevlin, Chief Executive
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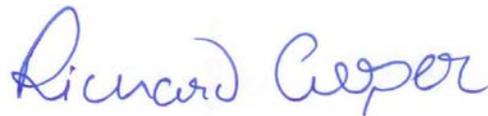
We are aware of the possibility that any devolution deal with a CA model agreed with the YNYER proposal prior to full membership of the LCR CA may lock our areas into the YNYER CA, thus removing the opportunity to become full members of the LCR CA in due course. We would therefore seek your reassurance that consideration of full membership of the LCR CA and transfer of transport powers will not be prohibited by the establishment in advance of a YNYER CA. We would wish that the final agreement on the LCR devolution deal is explicit with regard to the safeguards around potential full membership of the CA.

Your early indication and assurance on these matters would be warmly welcomed, and we would be willing to meet with you in London to discuss this in more detail if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely,



**Richard Foster, Leader
Craven District Council**



**Richard Cooper, Leader
Harrogate Borough Council**

Cc: Cllr Peter Box, Leader – Wakefield Council
Cllr Judith Blake, Leader – Leeds City Council
Tom Riordan, Chief Executive – Leeds City Council