

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>Councillor Phil Davies</b>
<b>CABINET PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER</b>	<b>Graham Burgess, Chief Executive</b>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

**1. COMBINED AUTHORITY**

The third meeting of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority took place on 19<sup>th</sup> September. This latest meeting clearly demonstrates the extensive work that has been carried out over the last few months and how we are working together across the whole of the City Region to deliver economic growth, transport improvements, and create employment.

At the meeting, the City Region's ambitious long-term rail strategy was approved, ensuring that the national rail network meets the needs of the City Region over the next 30 years. Considerable work has also continued to ensure that the Liverpool City Region gains the most benefit and opportunities from High Speed 2 (HS2) proposals. The City Region has established its own campaign to secure a dedicated link to the high speed network.

The Combined Authority also discussed the next stages of implementing the Government's Growth Deal funding. The Liverpool City Region was awarded £232m as part of this to support a number of transport schemes and for skills capital funding. Funds will be also be used to establish a Growth Hub as well as supporting the International Festival for Business in 2016.

**2. NORTHERN DEVOLUTION**

As Leader of Wirral Council and through my role as Chair of the Combined Authority, I have been leading a number of external discussions with other partners including the Northern Combined Authorities and the Local Government Association, to agree how we can collectively build the case for greater devolved political and financial powers and build the case for Northern devolution.

Against the backdrop of the historical Scottish referendum, there is an increasing level of debate across all political parties for the need to devolve more power, decision making and resources to the City Regions.

I will continue to work with partners and key contributors to the devolution debate, to agree some clear actions for how local Councils and the Combined Authorities can play a pivotal role in taking this agenda forward.

### **3. LIVING WAGE**

The Council continues to work in partnership with the North West Trades Union Congress (TUC) and is leading a network of North West local authorities in order to raise awareness and share best practice and practical approaches to embedding the Living Wage.

The Council became a Living Wage employer in 2013, and just recently, we extended our approach to ensure that the Council now pays the Living Wage to Apprentices.

We are now going through the process of becoming an accredited Living Wage employer, and are working with local partners to increase the number of employers who pay the Living Wage in Wirral. This will include further events to be held during Living Wage Week which this year runs between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November.

### **4. ACCESSIBLE BRITAIN CHALLENGE**

On behalf of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Council is hosting 'The Accessible Britain Challenge' conference on the 10<sup>th</sup> October at the Floral Pavilion. 'The Accessible Britain Challenge' is a new national initiative which encourages communities to work with disabled people to tackle inequalities and remove barriers that prevent them from being able to participate and contribute to their community.

The conference will provide an ideal opportunity for the City Region to collectively work together to establish methods such as the evacuation scheme devised at our Council, to make all of our communities more accessible and inclusive. We have invited guest speakers from The Accessible Britain Challenge, Merseyside Fire Service, Merseyside Disability Federation, Merseytravel, Liverpool Football Club and Visit England to attend the conference. The conference will hopefully be a lively forum, which will provide a platform for collaboration and co-production between disabled people and organisations attending.