

'DISAPPOINTMENT'—BUT TEES VALLEY WILL KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Following the announcement in today's Budget that Manchester and Leeds have been selected as the two initial areas of the country for the Government's 'City Region Forerunner' initiative, the following statement has been issued by Hugh Lang, Chair of the Tees Valley Unlimited partnership:

"Naturally we are disappointed that, having put forward what we felt was widely recognised as a very strong bid, we have not been named in the initial areas chosen for the 'City Region Forerunner' initiative.

"However, the Tees Valley remains at the forefront of taking forward partnership working to tackle economic, social and environmental challenges. Only a few weeks ago, at the TVU's inaugural annual conference, the Local Government Minister John Healey praised the Tees Valley as an example for other areas.

"We were one of the first parts of the country to be given the opportunity to sign a 'Multi Area Agreement' with the Government which enables the Tees Valley local authorities, working with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors, to speed up progress on key issues affecting the whole of the sub-region.

"All those involved with Tees Valley Unlimited are committed to working with the Government and partners, including One North East and the Homes and Communities Agency, to ensure that resources are targeted at our key economic development and regeneration, housing and transport priorities...and that local businesses have the skills and talent to deliver their full potential and ensure that individuals are able to contribute to the economy and have a better quality of life.

"TVU will be continuing its dialogue with Government on ways to improve the delivery of economic outcomes for Tees Valley."

That point was underlined today by Hazel Blears, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who commented "Although Tees Valley has not been announced today as a City Region Forerunner, we very much value the work that Tees Valley has been pioneering. We are committed to continuing our discussions with the authorities on delivering the Multi Area Agreement commitments and the potential to build on the MAA in other areas such as skills, employability and enterprise."

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