

# Board Meeting 10 May 2016



## Paper 3 - Liverpool City Region Devolution Update – Alan Jemmett

### 1. Introduction

With Local Elections now completed, the City Region can get back to business under the guidance of Mayor Anderson and the Combined Authority. There is however little substantive to report to the Board.

### 2. River Mersey

Mark Fletcher (Chair) is meeting with Ged Fitzgerald on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May and we will report back on progress following that meeting. A copy of the text from the Task Force letter is enclosed at the bottom of this report. Until we have clarity on the arrangements moving forward there is little to report though the opening of the new Sandon Dock WWTW is another milestone in the journey of investment and improvement in the River.

### 3. LCR Strategic Spatial Framework

A key focus for planning colleagues is currently commissioning the LCR Housing Strategy as this will form a key part of the evidence base for the LCR Strategic Spatial Framework alongside other considerations such as employment sites and green belt.

It is expected that Nature Connected will be invited to participate within the LCR Housing and Spatial Planning Board though the precise mechanism for engagement and means of influence has yet to be agreed. I suggest that the following may be of particular interest to Board members:

- To ensure that the LCR SSF is evidence-driven and that this evidence includes areas of particular relevance to Nature Connected including the GI prospectus, LCR SUD, LCR Ecological Network, LCR GI Framework and key economic locations and priorities. Consideration also needs to be given to strengthening the health and well-being influence in this process.
- To ensure that the LCR SSF is infrastructure-driven and that the definition of infrastructure goes beyond the traditional “hard / grey” infrastructure of roads, railway lines, gas, water and electricity and also includes green and blue infrastructure, sustainable transport infrastructure and digital.

It should be remembered in developing the LCR SSF that the Combined Authority and Districts have to fulfil their “Duty to Co-operate” with the LNP and pay due regard to its views. **To open and strengthen dialogue it may be useful to, In due course, invite a representative of the Housing and Spatial Planning Board to provide a presentation / discussion item.**

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Mr Ged Fitzgerald  
Chief Executive  
Liverpool Council  
16 March 2016

Dear Mr Fitzgerald

## **Devolution Agreement, River Mersey and River Mersey Task Force – Opportunities for the Liverpool City Region**

I am writing to you as Chair of the River Mersey Task Force Group, a group that was set up under the previous Liverpool City Region Deal (LCR Deal) to encourage stakeholders across the LCR to “make the most” of the one of the City Regions’ greatest assets, the River Mersey. Given the recognition the river has received in the Devolution Agreement, the Task Force is seeking your support to create a meaningful partnership between it, the LCR Combined Authority and Government that recognises the contribution the Mersey can make to the economic, environmental and social goals of the LCR and what interventions are required to realise these.

With the signing of the LCR Devolution Agreement there is now an expectation from both Government and the Combined Authority to move work forward in relation to Clear River, Discharge-free River and Tidal Energy. The Task Force has already met during 2016 to explore the contribution it could make to implement the Devolution Agreement and to discuss our interpretation of the agreement as it relates to the River.

This builds on work already undertaken by the Task Force since its creation in 2012 to respond to the challenges in the LCR Deal and those articulated by Lord Heseltine and Sir Terry Leahy. In addition to stakeholder engagement, evidence gathering and reporting to the Local Enterprise Partnership, we have produced two reports:

- Making the Most of the Mersey “Delivery of its Growth Potential” (enclosure 1), and
- The Value of the River Mersey “An appraisal using an ecosystem service-led approach.”

Both of these reports use an economic perspective to assess the functions and services that the River provides to the City Region. This work has been completed by the Task Force through its own resources and time and without the provision of any capacity or resource from the City Region.

The Task Force represents a “partnership of the willing”, a combination of private, public and non-governmental organisations all of whom have significant knowledge and experience of the river (see enclosure 2). Through our own analysis we have concluded that the aspirations, as set out in the Devolution Agreement, should be re-interpreted and developed into a resourced, delivery plan. There is much good work and investment ongoing and it is not our intention to duplicate or replace this. For example, activity around water quality is being driven by the regulatory processes and perhaps little more is needed beyond what is already planned.

However, there is a unique opportunity to address gaps, add value and economic opportunity at LCR and wider geographic scales. We believe the Task Force can play a part in realising this value and, in partnership with the Combined Authority, could set out the LCR ambition for what a “clean river standard” is. This would have several elements including water quality, flooding, water borne-litter, tidal energy and multi-use of the River and its waterfront and the draw for investment that it provides. .

We therefore wish to re-interpret the Devolution Agreement and focus on the gaps and areas of greatest need and opportunity. Our Total Economic Value approach can provide the business case for such activity and may also help secure investment. But, to catalyse and facilitate its work, we require a mandate from the LCR Combined Authority.

On behalf of the Task Force, our Deputy Chairman Anthony Hatton from Peel, Chris Matthews from United Utilities and I would very much value the opportunity to meet and discuss our initial interpretation of the Devolution Agreement with you. In particular we would wish to explore how the relationship with the LCR Combined Authority can be developed and what role the Task Force can play to ensure that the right partners are involved in developing the delivery plan.

I do hope that we have conveyed our genuine desire to give a voice to the Mersey as devolution comes to the LCR and the importance of doing so with the full support of the Combined Authority and Government. We would look forward to the opportunity to discuss this with you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Mark Fletcher

Chairman River Mersey Task Force (Global Water Business Leader, Arup)

cc – RM Task Force members

Joe Anderson, Mayor of Liverpool

Kathryn Garnell, Deputy CEX Liverpool City Council

Lucy Horne, Liverpool City Council

Nigel Weatherill, Chair of Mayoral Commission on Environmental Sustainability

All Leaders and CEXs in the Liverpool City Region

Encs., RMTF summary & Priorities; Making Most of Mersey Report; RMTF membership;  
Summary of the River Mersey Task Force and Priorities to 2040

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016