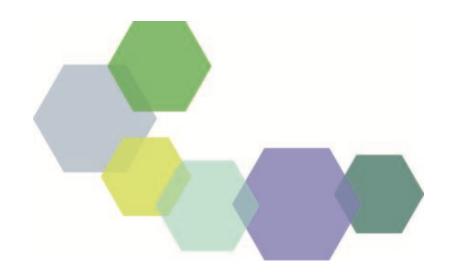




West Yorkshire
Combined
Authority: What
does it mean for
the front line?

Joanne Roney OBE Chief Executive, Wakefield Council





What context is local government operating in?

- Local government living in "the perfect storm"
- Over 40% budget cuts between 2010-2018
- Cuts across all public sector organisation
- Demand for social care services rising
- Welfare changes impacting on our most disadvantaged communities
- Changing demographics and high citizen expectations of public services and national context re Children's Safeguarding, economy etc.
- 'Status quo' is no longer affordable or deliverable



Where do Combined Authorities fit in?

IPPR 2014 'Condition Of Britain' report posits 3 levels of future public services;

Central Government: 'Strategic Direction'. Central Government setting out a " ... small number of national priorities and core entitlements in relation to social policy, and make clear how these will shape spending rounds and funding decisions". Includes core entitlements and minimum standards – whilst giving local areas more freedom to decide how services are delivered.

Combined Authorities and cross boundary partnerships: 'Jobs and Growth'. Partnerships greater powers to lead local economic development, based on functional economic areas. Include wider transport, business support and employment agendas and ... "over time, for controlling housing expenditure to build more homes and reduce reliance on housing benefit".

Local Government: 'Powerful Councils': Individual local authorities should take lead 'in tackling complex social problems that require concerted action by local services, and where deep relationships between citizens and practitioners are essential'



What is the West Yorkshire Combined Authority?

- Consists of 5 West Yorkshire Authorities plus York Council and the Leeds City Region LEP
- Responsible for realising the ambitions articulated within the Strategic Economic Plan through delivery of the £527 million Local Growth Fund Deal:
- ✓ Improving transport connectivity, accelerating housing growth and town centre regeneration
- ✓ Developing a skilled and flexible workforce
- ✓ Supporting growing business and promoting resource efficiency
- Created and oversees the £1bn West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund



Why is the West Yorkshire Combined Authority a good thing?

- Joins together strategic decision making on economic development, regeneration and transport
- Guarantees maximum impact derived from sub-regional/ regional investment
- Enables more decisions to be taken locally rather than in Whitehall
- Supports job creation and economic growth by securing additional government funding
- Enables strong pan-northern working
- Allows Councils to come together where collaboration makes sense



What are the Combined Authority's key driving principles?

Devolution
Localism
Subsidiarity
Growth



In the current context within local government......prevention, the modernisation of public services and enabling communities to do more for themselves, is as critical as creating economies of scale



Future role of local government is 'leader of place'.....

'Place' is primarily neighbourhoods, communities, districts – not sub-regions!

Capacity and resources often lie within communities that need them most



- Combined Authority only has the power to collaborate on transport, economic development and regeneration issues
- Economic growth underpins the local authorities' funding base: devolution agenda going to strengthen this link further
- Collaborative approach to economic growth allows in-house capacity to focus on social and community agendas and services
- Combined Authorities support exchange of learning and best practise allowing us to be more innovative about the way we deliver services within our districts
- Local authorities across West Yorkshire have been formally collaborating on the economic growth agenda for over 10 years – the focus has never been front line services



- Not a replacement for local authorities but about enabling collaboration that delivers value unachievable through working within our own boundaries
- Not at the expense of collaborative opportunities with other partners within the same district
- Combined Authority and the districts focussed on the same objectives of 'jobs and growth' for the benefit of all our communities
- Delivering jobs and growth will reduce the demand on already squeezed local services



- Financial imperative to explore additional collaborative opportunities but collaborative opportunities don't need to be 'bottom up'
- Additional powers from the Highways Agency, Environment Agency and BIS will allow us more control locally.
- Collaboration that enhances capacity, improves resilience and reduces duplication will strengthen our front line services
- Opportunity to review public services on local footprint
- Communities will always associate their local members with front line service delivery......accountability is key!



What does the Combined Authority hope to have achieved in 5 years time?

Outcomes:

- Integrated transport plan
- Devolved funding and fiscal freedom
- Fast tracked economic growth
- Effectiveness from merged functions and collaborations

