



Northern Future

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JEREMY CORBYN

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FOREWORD

By Jon Trickett MP, Hemsworth

When people say that Britain is a deeply unequal country, the first images which may flash into our minds are perhaps those of a banker on a yearly bonus equivalent to the income which a cleaner might earn in a lifetime.

But inequality also has a deeply regional character. It was recently revealed that nine out of the ten poorest regions in the north of Europe are in Britain. This is totally unacceptable.

The North of England was always one of the great engines of the country's prosperity and a world leader in invention, diligence and economic/technical excellence. We still have the same great attributes, as well as strong values of solidarity and mutual support. But the truth is that industrial decline and an economy which works more for the City Of London than it does for the rest of the country has left the North with a legacy of underinvestment, poor competitiveness and swathes of low wages, low skills and low productivity.

The document which is today being launched shows the innovative way in which the Jeremy for Leader campaign intends to develop its propositions. We have widely consulted our supporters and others about the problems facing the North. In the space of a few days we received over 1200 responses from individuals who live in the Northern regions.

These responses were passionate, authoritative and committed. We have now assembled the points which were made to us. The next step is to invite further debate as we move forward to a new settlement for our country. Other regions should do the same. If you admire the ideas in this document but feel that there is more to say, please contact us.

More important than that. If you feel attracted by a commitment to radical reform, and like our bottom-up style of policy development, then join us.

INTRODUCTION

By Richard Burgon, Labour MP for Leeds East; Rebecca Long Bailey MP, Labour MP for Salford and Eccles; Grahame Morris MP, Labour MP for Easington.

Central to the mission of the Labour movement is the battle against inequality and for growth, prosperity and jobs available to all.

In Britain, inequality also has a powerful geographic element. If we are going to build a modern Britain, which is productive and in which all our citizens profit from the new affluence we want to create, we will have to tackle chronic regional imbalances.

There are centres of real economic excellence, innovation and cultural renewal throughout the North. Our Universities are among the best in Europe. But the truth is that the North of England is one of the areas which has been hit the hardest over the past 30 years.

Both central government and private institutions like the banks and venture capitalists have failed to properly invest in new employment initiatives, public services, infrastructure and the Northern economy more generally.

Only last week the Office for National Statistics reported that labour productivity in the North is well below the average for England, whereas productivity in London is 27% above the average. This is not because people in the North don't work hard. Far from it. We have simply not had sufficient investment in the North. Businesses in the North too have lower levels of profitability than in London for example, and for the same reasons.

This under-investment and low productivity leads directly to other consequences. Even household incomes per head in the North are below the England average. In areas like Yorkshire, child poverty has been consistently higher than in areas like the South East. The rate of employment is lower in the North. Health effects of poverty are obvious everywhere in Britain, and in the North mortality rates are higher than the average for the country as a whole.

Against this backdrop the Jeremy Corbyn campaign asked people across the North of England what their priorities were. After gathering over 1200 responses, this document responds to some of the ideas and concerns people have raised in the consultation. It will also indicate what direction Jeremy would take as Labour Leader and Labour Prime Minister to address these concerns. It is not intended to be a blueprint 'from on high', but the start of a serious debate.

We want to ensure there is an ongoing discussion and we hope to continue this debate.

The overwhelming demand from respondents was not for 'special treatment', but for fair treatment: for adequate investment; for a transport network on par with that of the South East; and for a proper industrial strategy for decent work. There was also a clear and constant criticism that those who wielded power were distant, unaccountable or simply ignorant of the reality of people's lives.

The cities, towns and rural communities of the North cannot and will not be taken for granted by a Labour Party and a Labour Government led by Jeremy Corbyn. Such an approach would ultimately benefit all parts of the UK, including London and the South East.

This document seeks to begin a genuine discussion between the Labour Party at a national level and those living through the rapid economic and constitutional changes which the UK is experiencing. This consultation with communities in the North will be followed by further consultations with communities right across the country which are also being subjected to the kind of rapid change which all too often leaves ordinary people feeling 'left out' and 'left behind'. A Labour Party and a Labour Government led by Jeremy Corbyn will be all about making the economy the servant of ordinary people in our region and across the country.

TAKING BACK POWER

“The government makes decisions based on what life is like in the South of England and London in particular without a real understanding of what it’s like to live in the North of England. People in government generally have never experienced life in these regions and have limited understanding of life here.” **Respondent, Sheffield**

The North of England has to take back power from our centralised state. The centralisation of our government has seen the North lose out time and time again. This cannot continue.

Most parties on the surface agree to some sort of devolution to the North of England. What the Conservative government has embarked upon however is a cruel deception. They have devolved cuts to spending, but not the power to do anything to stop them. They have also added extra financial commitments that local councils will have to meet but without any extra money.

The Conservative government has torn schools away from the support networks of local authorities, regardless of the wishes of teachers and parents, and made them accountable directly to Whitehall, bypassing parents and local communities

And knowing that the Conservatives will never get control of councils in many of our towns and cities, they have sought to impose a mayoral system without the consent of the people.

It was unsurprising therefore that this scepticism of Conservative plans was echoed in responses.

“Some of the principles behind ‘Northern Powerhouse’ are compatible such as devolution, but as long as devolution promotes real localism and independence. Not just a more efficient chain of cities which better serve London. The influence and inflation of London should be checked by moving as many public institutions out of the capital in order to keep the UK united.” **Respondent, Liverpool**

“Osborne’s hot air about a ‘Northern Powerhouse’ meets with derision here in the North because we know that he has no idea about how people here think and feel”. **Respondent, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire**

This view is also surfacing in the business community. The Industrial Communities Alliance have said that “if devolution is accompanied by an abdication of responsibility by central government or a cut in funding, the net benefits are likely to be illusory.” PricewaterhouseCoopers say that devolution and decentralisation are being inhibited by financial pressures.

It is important that we rebalance power within the United Kingdom, and particularly within England. We must also learn the lessons of the last Labour government in this regard.

First, constitutional process might excite the political class, but there are no constitutional answers to economic problems. Devolving powers for their own sake is tokenism, and will not create jobs, raise wages, or build homes. New institutions take time to bed in, and people need help now.

Second, greater democracy cannot be imposed from Westminster. The Scottish Constitutional Convention for example ran for ten years before the creation of the Scottish Parliament.

Ideas for how to fix this imbalance varied considerably. Some mentioned establishing one or more northern assemblies, while others wanted to see central government departments relocated to the North.

“Yorkshire parliament (and for NE and NW too) with same powers as Scottish parliament. By definition the nine or so regions of the UK should have their own parliaments with roughly the same level of power.” **Respondent, Yorkshire**

“The people of the North need to be represented by local people who actually understand the issues facing the towns and cities, not by Whitehall politicians.” **Respondent, Southport**

A sense that the status quo was unacceptable ran throughout:

“My own view and that of my friends is that we feel we can’t influence anything - it’s all done down there with people who don’t know, don’t care, and have nothing in common with us.” **Respondent, Grange-over-sands, Cumbria**

The debate has already started in the North. Community groups have already been brought together independently to discuss devolution and we need to build on this growing tide of interest and activity.

There should be a constitutional convention set up as soon as possible. There would be a process of engagement with civil society groups, local authorities, businesses and the wider public across the North to find the best way of governing.

REBALANCING THE ECONOMY

In order to truly empower the North of England we need to rebalance the economy. As IPPR has already noted the prosperity and economic growth of the North of England is central to the success of Britain’s economy as a whole.

There is huge regional inequality and this was a clear theme in the responses received from the consultation. A number of people raised concerns about the insecure nature of jobs, their low hours and low pay in the North of England.

“I work in the cab and given the struggle I have found to get a job (I am a graduate) things must be much worse for others who have not had higher education. Working class families struggling on a day to day basis to afford basic things such as food and rent. Working as many hours as possible and still not being able to live comfortably.” **Respondent, Liverpool**

Between 2010-14 London created 6 times as many jobs as in the North West, 4 times as many as the North East, 3 times as many as the West Midlands and twice as much as Yorkshire and the East Midlands.

Britain is one of the most centralised countries in the European Union - this is from Whitehall's historical role controlling an Empire. The New Economics Foundation argues that we need to break free from London-centred finance and property bubble. Despite notable successful cases, Local Enterprise Partnerships, like their predecessors Regional Development Agencies, lack the scope, capacity and scale to tackle these problems free from central government diktat.

We need to redesign the economy around some clear social and economic objectives and fulfilled by industrial strategy.

Some respondents were concerned that the current proposals for city regions left behind smaller towns and rural communities, and care must be taken to ensure a policy did not merely decentralise power to a few powerful urban centres.

“When politicians think of The North, they tend to think of the big cities - Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Newcastle etc. Cumbria is a more rural county with different problems and needs.” **Respondent, Barrow-in-Furness**

Areas of high unemployment are in need of investment to genuinely revive them. We need to create higher wage, better skilled jobs. We should be aiming for full employment and that means thinking about developing new industries and infrastructure. That is we propose a National Investment Bank to invest in new infrastructure across Britain.

INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

“The root of the problem is the decline in old industries. In the 1960's, 80% of the people in employment in County Durham worked for the National Coal Board. By 2000, virtually none of them did. Effectively the whole economy of the County had been removed in one person's working lifetime. It is no surprise in those circumstances that Durham is now a low-wage, high unemployment economy.”

Respondent, Stockton-on-Tees

Since 1970, manufacturing has fallen as a share of economic output from 27% to 10%. This has not only seen a major decline in skilled work and stable employment, but has had major knock on effects throughout the economy, as 70% of the research and development funding for the UK is in the manufacturing sector.

As policy, the emphasis was shifted to financial services based upon the city of London. Areas of the North of England have become increasingly dependent on public sector jobs, which are now coming under sustained attack by the Conservative government. One respondent described a particularly bleak outlook:

“The North has been forgotten. Investment is limited, and communities destroyed by the collapse of industry has led to whole generations being dependent upon the state.”

Respondent, Doncaster

However, many respondents, while sharing the demand for manufacturing as a key element of the North's future, had a more optimistic outlook.

“If you look at a country like Germany, that has held on to its manufacturing industry in spite of a more global market, you can see the potential that the UK can have, and with a large workforce, the North-West can be a large part of that.”

Respondent, Liverpool

“The North has some great people that just need some investment and help to give back to society.” **Respondent, Halifax**

Government has a powerful role in ensuring people have skills via a commitment to lifelong learning, that the infrastructure exists both in transport and broadband access for new companies, and in helping build links between universities, entrepreneurs, finance and workers to ensure the success of projects. That is why proposals for a National Education Service and for a National Investment Bank are necessary.

Yet for too long the UK government, in contrast to its competitors Europe, Japan and North America, has failed to adequately support industries with government contracts, guarantees and support. The emphasis has been on short term, low cost procurement, not on the social benefit to the country as a whole.

It is in the long term interests of the UK to rebuild a resilient industrial base, and, with a surfeit of space, energy and water as well as people who could retrain and reskill, the North of England is the place to do this.

The way we rebuild this industrial base should reflect the innovative and entrepreneurial character the North of England has always been known for.

Access to local finance is particularly important. Local efforts such as the “Bank of Salford”, a collaboration between Salford Credit Union, the local authority and civil society groups, are examples of the sort of innovative thinking required. These schemes should be examined further, as should the German “Lander” model which has been so vital for regional growth in that country. Reversing the centralisation of finance in the City of London is key to wider economic restructuring.

We should look at building sustainable and green industries that tackle climate change, aiming to make the North of England a world leader in developing green technologies. A few respondents highlighted the need for this progress.

“Development of green economy and tech infrastructure, should be creating our own digital hub with new FinTech ideas. As an island nation we need to export more than we import, made in Manchester, made in Britain etc should be a global statement.”

Respondent, Manchester

There also needs to be investment in the North's digital infrastructure. For example, access to broadband is a central part of ensuring a strong economy. Broadband and mobile connectivity are taken for granted these days and play a vital role in nurturing and enhancing economic growth. According to OfCom though, the South East still dominates when it comes to 4G and superfast broadband, leaving the North, especially the rural North, in the lurch.

The need for a connected North, from towns and cities to rural areas, also reinforces the need to protect Royal Mail's universal service obligation.

"I live in South Lakeland. Even after the government grant for fibre optic broadband we will still not get it - and we are a kilometre away from the major dual carriageway in South Lakes! ...no-one would permit a lack of fibre optics in London!"

Respondent, Cumbria.

"Invest in infrastructure projects, such as improving the internet which is as slow as ditch water in my part of the Rother Valley." **Respondent, Sheffield**

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

In order to rebuild and rebalance the Northern economy, we will need the skills and education to drive forward progress and to power green and digital infrastructure regeneration.

A number of responses to the consultation were very critical of the one-way movement of skilled labour in Britain.

"Brain drain. There's very little in terms of career options in my area. Currently I am looking for jobs in Manchester, or Leeds, or even that separate city state of London. I know this might sound cocky, but why not move some of the government departments to other cities in the north, provide opportunities for intelligent, hard-working people up here who may not be able to relocate to London or afford to do the unpaid or limited paid internships that must be done before being able to work in such departments?"

Respondent, Bassetlaw

The weighting of graduate jobs being created in London and the South East is pulling graduates away from the many high-calibre universities in the North, depriving the region of the economic growth it nurtured through educating graduates.

For every London graduate who moves to the North, twelve leave and move to London, according to figures from the City Growth Commission. The result of this is that 49% of working age Londoners have degree level education, compared with 32% in Greater Manchester, 29% in the North East, the same in West Yorkshire, 28% in Sheffield, 27% in Liverpool.

Those skilled people who have the familial, community and educational links and local knowledge to help start new businesses, improve local services and hold those in authority to account all too often are forced to leave. Young people in particular said they felt this pressure.

"The lack of job opportunities with low pay and no real prospects. The future doesn't seem too bright for the youth of our society." **Respondent, Gateshead**

This 'Dick Whittington' effect results in a vicious cycle. Industries need the presence of skilled workers to set up in an area, but skilled workers need job opportunities immediately or they will leave.

Many Labour local authorities have already shown innovative approaches, from paying part of the salary for local graduates starting out in their areas, to forging connections between new industrial developments and further and higher education institutions so students know what skills they need to get a job in their home town or city.

At a national level, a targeted graduate scheme for those interested in going into industry could focus on supporting people with roots in northern communities to stay and build their careers and businesses there, rather than being sucked into the capital. A clearing system, similar to that used by UCAS for university places, could be used for graduate employment schemes, with regional targeting to make people aware that there are other options than London.

Government must lead the way here, both as an employer and as a major purchaser of goods and services. Moving government departments out of London, and ensuring procurement processes support regional businesses with a view to long term development is vital.

The regions of the North of England are behind the English average for the proportion of students with 5+ A*-Cs and above the national average for the percentage of the 18+ working population with no qualifications.

“Cut tuition fees and further accessibility to university, guaranteeing places for UK school leavers ahead of high fee paying international school leavers.”

Respondent, Huddersfield

Young people also have to face the daunting fees that come with university. Many capable and able young people are deterred from going to university due to the prospect of sky high debts. That’s why we have said we would abolish tuition fees and restore grants. Plans for how to fund this move were published last month. A cycle of under-investment and under-education is holding back the achievements of children, the economy and our society.

More must be done to pull together student, workers, educators, government and employers, and we would establish a National Education Service which would strategically coordinate education and skills training for a new economy. In an age where new technologies and industries require new skills, it is essential that we have a lifelong learning service that offers new skills and understanding throughout our working lives. Only by addressing educational disadvantage at every stage can we ensure the industrial and business growth upon which the UK’s future prosperity is based.

“I really liked Jeremy’s comments about adult education as I am a mature student myself. Give people a second chance in life.”

Respondent, Stockport.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

“Transport links. Currently I commute on the Leeds to Manchester line via rail and the overcrowding and late running/ cancellation of trains is a daily occurrence.”

Respondent, Halifax

Transport was a theme revisited again and again by respondents. The lack of infrastructure investment over decades has created a sense of frustration and anger at what was seen as a clear favouritism of London and the South East when it comes to funding.

“London gets CrossRail, Leeds doesn’t even have a decent bus service.”

Respondent, Leeds

The tightest regulation of transport remains in London. If a publicly controlled transport network, accountable to democratic representatives, is good enough for the political, business and media elite of the capital, then our other great cities and towns deserve no less.

“I want to scrap Clause 24 of the Railways Act and allow local municipalities to operate their own rail and bus networks. It is also essential that electrification of rail lines in the North occur prior to any further infrastructure upgrades in the South East and London.”

Respondent, Manchester

As an essential first step, cities across the country should have the same powers over transport that London was given by the last Labour government. This would allow them to regulate their own rail, tram and bus networks, make their own decisions about charges for parking and congestion, and better plan the correct mix for themselves.

The amount of investment in transport received by London far outweighs that received in the North. IPPR established last August that in terms of transport infrastructure, London received 24 times as much as the North East per resident, 9 times as much as per resident in Yorkshire and 10 times as much in the North West once the decommissioning costs of Sellafield were excluded from calculations.

Transport is an essential part of any growth plan, and we must work towards a fairer funding formula to ensure London does not utterly dominate government infrastructure.

Rail

“We have been provided with hand-me-down rolling stock and “buses on rails” for many a year, and the result is we’ve been left with near-obsolete carriages, minimal services and overcrowding during peak times without fail.” **Respondent, Manchester**

When the rail system was broken up by the previous Conservative Government, we were promised a new era of lower prices, greater choice and superior trains.

This was of course, completely false. High barriers to entry have meant that very few private sector companies have entered the market. Despite bigger public subsidies than ever before, train fares have risen by almost a fifth in real terms in the last ten years.

Meanwhile the average age of trains is over 19 years, and in the case of Northern Rail over 25 years, meaning most of its rolling stock was built prior to privatisation.

Even more bizarrely, while the government forbids British public sector bidders, it allows the state-owned rail firms of other countries to bid to run our services for their own profit. Over half the rail franchises in Britain are controlled by the French, Dutch and German governments. It cannot be right for commuters in Middlesbrough to pay through taxes and fares to subsidise those in Munich, for people in Everton to pay for rail improvements in Eindhoven, or new rolling stock for Lille to be paid for by Leeds.

Each rail franchise should be taken into public ownership as it comes up for renewal, allowing a coordinated approach based upon the public interest.

We must embark on the long overdue project of electrification of Britain's rail network, not only creating employment but lowering long term running costs and reducing the environmental impact of the railways.

Restoration of Network Rail's electrification plans on TransPennine and Midland Main-line routes shelved by the Transport Secretary in June, particularly Manchester to Leeds and York funding for which was announced in 2011.

Crucially, it would redevelop the skills and expertise at building our own rolling stock here in Britain as part of an overall industrial strategy. That much of the network continues to run on trains built in Britain prior to the deliberate decimation of the industry by the Major government is a testament to the skill of those workers.

Buses

Buses are an essential public service, and should be run as such. Deregulation in the sector has created the ludicrous situation of some routes being over-supplied, as companies cause congestion and lower air quality while competing for market share. Meanwhile in rural communities, the young, the elderly and the disabled are left without any means of effective transport if they happen to live on a route that is declared "un-profitable".

"In Cumbria, public transport is rarely an option open to those of us living the country. I'd like to hear Labour say that it would invest in and support with subsidies, a bus network that would help everyone in the country not just city dwellers."

Respondent, Penrith

There is also a problem with cost, in many places (particularly in rural areas) the cost of a ticket far outstrips that of a fare in London.

The mandatory tendering of transport services to private sector bidders must be abandoned, so our towns, cities and villages can make the right decisions for themselves on how to provide services for the benefit of people, and not to generate profits for private companies.

Housing

There is a major housing crisis across Britain, and the North of England is no exception. The nature of our imbalanced economy means there is no one size fits all answer for the North; there are huge geographical disparities in housing needs and challenges within the region.

“I feel the social housing shortage is a real worry. We need to build more affordable council homes to help those on low wages as well as the most vulnerable, such as people who suffer disabilities, especially mental health issues. I have noticed the increases in homelessness every time I walk through Manchester and I know this is a direct result of current government policies.” **Respondent, Stockport**

There are often long waiting lists for social housing in certain areas. For example, in Wakefield it would take 11 years to clear the social housing waiting list. The Conservative government’s policy to extend right to buy to housing associations is only going to make this situation worse.

Jeremy has said one of the priorities of a National Investment Bank would be housing, and that he would remove restrictions on councils to borrow to build council housing. He has also raised extending the Right to Buy to private tenants, and will consult on this policy. It would be funded by withdrawing the £14 billion tax allowances currently given to buy-to-let landlords.

A number of respondents highlighted that the housing crisis is particularly impacting on young people.

“There is no affordable housing and even those in their 30s can’t own their home. There is also a huge stigma surrounding those in the little social housing we have.” **Respondent, Ripon**

“For me personally, as a young professional who travels by bike and public transport, and is always on the lookout for somewhere cheap to live (I’m earning around a living wage), the most important thing is infrastructure and caps on rent from private landlords.” **Respondent, Salford**

Clearly more affordable homes need to be built and we need land to build them. Organisations such as the Northern Housing Consortium have suggested that councils should be given tough “lose it or use it” rights to address land banking.

Arts and Culture

“Support for our local arts and culture - local professional theatre, rural touring, galleries, museums, dance and music. The support of what makes this country good and decent.” **Respondent, Lancashire**

“The massive cuts to northern councils also stops our councils helping us build a proper society with a breadth of activities for the people here including art, drama, libraries...” **Respondent, Huddersfield**

Culture is a massive success story for the North of England. Northern artworks, such as the Angel of the North, are international landmarks. Northern filmmakers work everywhere from Hollywood to Salford. Northern musicians have dominated the charts since the Beatles, while Northern writers win awards from literary prizes to Baftas. Culture is as an industry which contributes to thriving, vibrant communities, supports jobs and economic activity while adding to the quality of life of residents and participants. Cultural activity can also be an effective way of developing skills, confidence and connections in communities.

The value of this sector is often overlooked, despite the creative and cultural industries in the North East region alone being estimated to generate more than three quarters of a billion pounds in additional economic impact, and where a single festival such as Manchester International Festival can generate an economic benefit of £38 million. The North creates a lot of talent (creative graduates etc) but there is a huge amount of brain-drain. A relatively small amount of investment in space, resources and support could really help.

Britain punches above its weight in film and television internationally, and our thriving domestic theatre scene is attended by twice as many people as the Premier League. The connections between the design industry and new technologies, such as gaming and app-development mean a thriving art scene goes hand in hand with hi-tech jobs.

The contribution to the cultural life of our towns and cities is also vital. A large part of the draw of London on young professionals comes from its dominance in the cultural landscape. By creating regional competitors, more people across the UK will have access to their benefits, and those seeking a career in the creative industries will not be forced to leave their home communities to move to the capital.

Unfortunately reductions in funding and support since 2010 threaten that success and means London continues to exert undue dominance in the cultural landscape.

The Conservative government has embarked on a process of reducing funding and support in favour of private donors and fund-raising.

This has impacted on provision throughout the North of England and across other regions. A report last year by independent consultants Peter Stark, Christopher Gordon and David Powell found that the imbalance in national funding for the arts in London and in the rest of the country will worsen. It argued that £689 million (43.4%) will be invested in the arts in London at £81.87 per head of population (php) as against £900million in the rest of the country at £19.80 php - a ratio of over 4:1 in favour of the capital.

Over-reliance on philanthropy in terms of arts investment exacerbates economic and social inequalities – because if there are not the same number of businesses willing to invest, this impacts on what can be delivered by local organisations

There is a convincing argument to address the current imbalance across the country, linking National Lottery Funding spent on good causes such as arts and culture more closely to the regions in which that money was raised.

As in other areas, national institutions must lead the way, and creating new national flagship arts organisations based outside London should be seriously considered.

JUSTICE FOR NORTHERN COMMUNITIES

We want to look forward to the future prospects of the North and build a North that is once again a world leader. A country which is founded on principles of justice ought not to turn its back when communities that helped to create our wealth are left behind as a consequence of economic or industrial changes.

Equally, in order to move forward and progress, we need to address past injustices.

No one can deny the lasting impact of the Thatcher government on the North of England. The miners' strike of 1984-5 is one of the most iconic and devastating moments in our history. There were a number of injustices where the truth has never been acknowledged.

Cabinet papers from the Thatcher years that were released recently confirmed that the government at the time of the 1984-5 strike not only misled the public about the extent of the pit closure programme, but also sought to influence police tactics during the strike.

It is now only right that we recognise just how badly ministers at the time treated the coalfield communities and acknowledge the full scale of the economic legacy of the pit closure programme.

We want to build on the work of the Justice for Coalfields campaign, launched by the Labour Party in January 2014. We aim to see the demands of the campaign met. The government should make a formal apology for the actions of the previous Conservative government during the time of the strike and for misleading the public and set out all details of the interactions between the government and the police at the time of the strike.

One of the most shocking events of the miners' strike, was the events at Orgreave coking plant. It is now over 30 years since these events. However, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) still will not investigate. We support and want to work with the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign and their calls for a proper investigation into what happened on that day.

About five million people live in former coalfield communities. Their economies were destroyed when the pits were closed by Mrs Thatcher's government. We owe a special duty to communities damaged in that way. The present Tory government has effectively turned off the investment funds which remain necessary to modernise and regenerate the coalfield areas.

That there is finally a proper inquiry into the tragic events at Hillsborough, and the courageous nature of that campaign, demonstrates the importance of securing justice, even if it was delayed by decades by those in power.

CONCLUSION

There is limited space to address all the issues that face such a large and diverse area as the North of England. This document is only a snapshot of the responses we received, but it gives a larger picture of the challenges that we are faced with.

What is clear is that a real strategy for the North of England, and all regions, must involve a dedicated break with an economics that focuses solely on what is good for the City of London.

The government must invest not on the basis of short term goals and quarterly accounts, nor on the whims of private companies, but with the long term interests of the British people in mind. We will need new investment institutions, rooted in the Northern economy to ensure deep rooted regeneration.

The North was the industrial heartland of Britain. It was weakened as an act of deliberate policy, and requires improvements in transport, educational access, and concentrated industrial funding to rebuild. But on a fair playing field, it can once again become an innovative and productive economy, providing prosperity for all.

