



Phil Woolas MP
Minister for Local Government and Community Cohesion

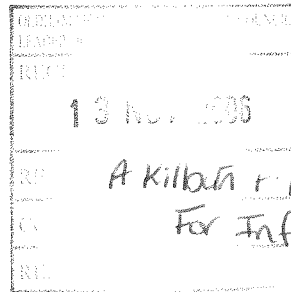
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Dear Leader

As you will be aware Ruth Kelly, David Miliband (whilst an ODPM Minister) and I have held a series of summits with smaller cities and towns across England.

Between March and July, these have been held with Regional Cities East, Central Lancashire, Coastal Cities and Towns, Tees Valley and Hull and the Humber, South West Cities and Towns and Stoke. During these visits, I and other Ministers have had interesting discussions with a range of people who live and work in our cities and towns including young people, business leaders, representatives from the voluntary and community sector and local authority leaders.

These conversations provided some extremely useful information, not only on the problems that cities and towns still face, but also the positives. People feel a great pride in their local area and whilst many felt that there were still things to do, they also recognised how far their city or town had come over the last few years.

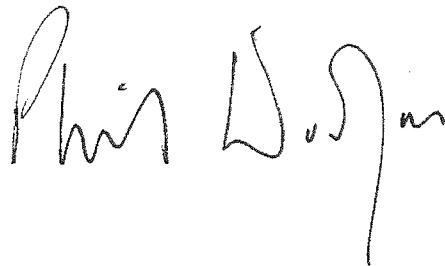
One of the main issues that came out strongly at the summits was that economic performance is best developed across local authority boundaries. We recognise the importance of this. We support partnerships between local authorities and will seek to provide help and assistance on how to set them up, as well as looking at how we can incentivise them.

We are already working with some local authorities on city business cases. Many of the proposals are based around devolution and local authorities working together across their boundaries. As you will know, the Local Government White Paper is based on radical new policies on devolution, partnership working and sub-regional arrangements through new Multi Area Agreements.

We are about to publish all the enabling measures from the second round of the LAAs which have been agreed or not agreed (and the reasons why they have not been agreed). We believe these are useful in showing you what enabling measures have been accepted and looking at whether that measure would also be useful for you.

With this in mind, we do not feel that publication of a menu of enabling measures at this stage would be worthwhile. I feel this would produce a dual track approach to enabling measures which would only increase complexity and bureaucracy and that the menu adds only a limited amount to the system. I have decided that enabling measures for individual local authorities should continue to be solely negotiated through Government Offices as part of the LAA process. This bespoke approach is more pragmatic and more in line with what local authorities have been asking for.

Can I, however, take this opportunity to encourage you all, as part of future LAA refreshes, to continue to use this mechanism and to push and challenge us to give you innovative enabling measures which allow you to make a real difference. The summits showcased many potential enabling measures which would be suitable for individual local authorities and I strongly encourage summit participants to follow these up with your Government Office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Woolas'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, thin tail on the final 's'.

PHIL WOOLAS