

News story: Chancellor to meet Metro Mayors and visit key infrastructure in the North

Philip Hammond will today (Monday 4 September) convene the government's first meeting with all three Metro Mayors from the North of England, to discuss boosting growth across the Northern Powerhouse regions.

Boosting productivity in the region will be top of the agenda when he meets Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, Steve Rotherham, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, and the Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen. These three areas alone have a population of five million and combined economy worth more than £102 billion.

Employment across the Northern Powerhouse is currently at a record high (73.8%), but Ministers believe more needs to be done to tackle the productivity gap. The government will continue to support the region through devolution and investment – including record amounts in transport, alongside support for skills and innovation. Ministers will shortly be announcing further funding to improve roads right across the North.

The Chancellor is clear the Northern Powerhouse will have a key role in the Industrial Strategy and efforts to ensure Britain makes the most of the opportunities ahead as we leave the European Union.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

Boosting productivity in the North is at the very heart of the government's ambition to build an economy that works for everyone.

As we prepare to leave the European Union it is even more important that we support the Northern Powerhouse to reach its full potential.

That's why we are investing record amounts in infrastructure, and working with Metro Mayors to encourage growth and create opportunities throughout the North.

He will also see how work is progressing on a new rail link, Ordsall Chord, which will connect Manchester's three main train stations, and provide new direct-links to Manchester Airport from across the North of England. This will help support jobs and growth across the region, reducing commuting times and speeding up links to foreign markets – all key to helping boost productivity.

He will travel to Leeds to see progress being made to create up to 700 homes at the Seacroft development in the east of the city. This has received support from the government through the Home and Communities Agency's single

land programme. The Chancellor will reveal good progress is being made on a 'housing deal' with Leeds, which could unlock thousands more new homes. These deals will look to increase the supply of housing in areas of high demand.

Communities and Local Government Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

I want to strike housing deals across the country to support councils' ambitious and innovative plans for new homes, and to help boost supply where it's most needed. We're committed to considering all tools at our disposal, and by using our money more flexibly we can deliver more homes.

We're making good progress with a Leeds housing deal and hope to announce further details at Autumn Budget. As well as increasing housing, this will help grow local economies as part of our commitment to the Northern Powerhouse.