

# **Cities and regions: governance dilemmas**

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## **THE NEW ART OF GOVERNANCE FOR CITIES AND REGIONS**

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### **Summary**

**This paper starts with some reflections on the rejection by the public of proposals for an elected regional assembly in the North East of England. Some general lessons are drawn from this experience to suggest that what people want is not necessarily more government but more effective governance. Reflections of the nature of the modern governance challenge are then presented. A new philosophy of networked community governance is outlined. Thereafter attention is turned to the roles and functions of local and regional governance at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Finally consideration is given towards the potential of city region governance in providing a new institutional framework for strategic decision-making in local communities.**

## **The English say no to regionalism**

Here is a startling fact for those who favour the decentralisation of political power. On November 4<sup>th</sup> 2004 by a ratio of 4 to 1 the voters of the North East region of England turned down the opportunity of a devolved elected regional assembly for their area.

People, it is clear, are not automatically inspired by the arguments for devolving power. Lack of interest can hardly be a key factor given the respectable 48% turnout achieved by the all postal ballot. But on reflection four factors help to explain the strong no vote.

First the devolved assembly proposed for the North East seemed to lack powers to do anything that would make a perceived difference to people's lives. Both supporters and opponents agree on this issue in practice. For supporters of regional government the lack of grasp over key issues was an Achilles' heel present in the reform plans, a point privately acknowledged before the vote and publicly promoted as the main excuse after the vote. For opponents the lack of powers merely proved the assembly would be a white elephant. John Prescott, the main advocate of regional devolution, struggled to persuade his colleagues to relinquish many powers. In the end to say that the North East assembly would have strategic planning powers for economic investment and transport, for example, told the average member of the public that the proposed assembly would do more talking than acting. The offer of a third rate version of a Scottish Parliament or a Welsh Assembly, with considerably less powers than the Greater London Authority, was seen through by the public and rejected.

Second and this point is less acknowledged by the supporters of regional reform , people need not see the new assembly as offering them a politics in which they would be engaged in. There was little sense that a new assembly would be more inclusive or engaging than previous regimes.. What was on offer was old politics, run by the established elites, and the public was not impressed. The simplistic slogan of the anti-Assembly campaign might have been misleading – Vote No to More Politicians- since with local government reorganisation combined with the establishment of a regional assembly there would have been fewer local politicians overall but there can be little doubt that people were saying no to more of the same politicians.

The third factor was an ill-thought through package of local government reorganisation that was thrown in as part of the mix that created an impression of further waste and expense without any great prospect of benefit. This was a reorganisation done to avoid the accusation of creating a further tier of local government in areas where regional assemblies were chosen rather than because of any positive vision of a new role or set of functions for local government. The inevitable squabbling and defensive posturing that accompanied was hardly an edifying experience for public consumption. It could not of helped the ‘yes’ cause.

Finally the symbolic or expressive elements of a North East elected assembly did have the same leverage as they appeared to have had in first the demand and then the delivery of elected bodies in Scotland and to a lesser extent Wales. A repeated comment by Scottish friends runs along the lines that the Scottish Parliament may be a

disappointment but at least it is our disappointment. The North East of all the England's regions had the nearest thing to a coherent claim to a cultural identity but clearly expressing that sense of identity does not require a regional assembly, as far as most residents are concerned. They can think of other and better ways to say they come from the North East.

A territorial assembly that was not a focus of real economic and social activity had little purchase with the public. People don't live their lives- do their shopping, go to work, take their leisure - in the North East. On these criteria of connection to lived experience none of the other administrative regions of England make sense as a basis for territorial government. Moreover people need to believe that they are not going to get the 'same again' style politics that passes them by. They need to see the institutions on offer as ones they can control or influence. Any attempt to rebuild a case for devolution needs to take account of these issues.

By law there can't be another referendum in the North East until 2011. So devolution built around the administrative regions of England is off the agenda for the foreseeable future. The referendums in the other northern areas were called off because of a near certainty of strong no votes in those areas. Outside the North the option of a vote was never seriously considered because of public disinterest. As far as devolution in England is concerned we are back to the drawing board.

But there are some wider lessons to draw:

- more government is not likely to be seen most people as the answer to the challenges of their community unless they are clear what that government could do to make a positive difference to their lives
- governance solutions may be more attractive than more government
- citizens find it difficult to focus on strategy and planning the governance of cities and regions has got to have some substance to it otherwise people will ignore it
- the politics of governance arrangements need to be constructed in a way that actively seeks the views and input of citizens, asking them to vote for more politicians to represent them is likely to lead to a negative response
- people find the phenomenon of politicians squabbling unedifying
- if you offer people a load of rubbish they will tell you
- identity and real patterns of social and economic activity matter when it comes to constructing governance arrangements

### **Networked community governance: the philosophical key to the future?**

The Government got the solution wrong badly in the case of the North East. But more than that defining what is the right governing solution for cities and regions is a challenging task not least because a more subtle and complex of understanding the governance challenge that have emerged in recent years. It is worth reviewing the challenge of networked community governance.

Networked community governance sets as its over-arching goal the meeting of community needs as defined by the community within the context of the demands of a complex system of multi-level governance. The model demands a diverse set of relationships with ‘higher’ tier government, local organisations and stakeholders. The relationships are intertwined and the systems of accountability are multiple. The political process is about identifying problems, designing solutions and assessing their impact. Success is not a simple matter of efficient service delivery but rather the complex challenge of whether an outcome favourable to the community has been achieved. The responsibility is not just to deliver certain services well but steer a community to meet the full range of its needs. The model takes up the challenge of holistic working which is achieving ‘greater effectiveness in tackling the problems that the public most care about’ <sup>1</sup>

Table 1 sets out in an abstract form three eras for the governing of local communities. In the post war Second world war period for large parts of the developed world local government played its part in the establishment of the core services of the welfare state and along with that role in the welfare state role went certain assumptions about how local services should be governed. A period of in which local government adopted a traditional public administration form gave way under pressure from a New Public Management wave carried first by the local government reorganization in the early 1970s. The consequent model of enabling local governance on offer was driven by a different set of ideas about the way those public services should be governed, with efficiency and customer care as the watch words. We are moving at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century towards another set of ideas about the governance

of local public services. This is a vision of networked community governance that could provide the basis for a new role for local government.

Under the traditional public administration model the key task for local government was delivering a set of public services. The assumption was that what was required was largely known. It was to build better schools, housing, sewerage, roads, welfare provision and that we could rely on expert officers and politicians to define what was precisely needed in any one locality. Within its role as provider of services in the welfare state local government was in some countries a dominant and rather domineering player. It raised local taxes and managed central government grants in order to deliver and develop services. It managed service delivery largely in-house and was confident that its actions were imbued with a special public sector of ethos and mandated through the legitimacy provided by the operation of local elections. Professionalism and confident partisan politics were to the fore. In other countries local government remained weak and under developed. The lack of resources and capacity held back the creation of an effective set of institutions. In many cases local government lacked the basic administrative capacity to run major services and take on substantial development challenges.

**Table 2: Eras of local governing <sup>2</sup>**

	<b>Elected local government in post war setting</b>	<b>Local government Under New Public Management</b>	<b>Networked Community Governance</b>
<b>Key objectives of the governance system</b>	Managing inputs, delivering services in the context of a national welfare state	Managing inputs and outputs in a way that ensures economy and responsiveness to consumers	The overarching goal is greater effectiveness in tackling the problems that the public most care about
<b>Dominant ideologies</b>	Professionalism and party partisanship	Managerialism and Consumerism	Managerialism and localism
<b>Definition of Public interest</b>	By politicians / experts. Little in the way of public input	Aggregation of individual preferences, demonstrated by customer choice	Individual and public preferences produced through a complex process of interaction
<b>Dominant model of accountability</b>	Overhead democracy: voting in elections, mandated party politicians, tasks achieved through control over the bureaucracy	Separation of politics and management, politics to give direction but not hands on control , managers to manage, additional loop of consumer assessment built into the system	Elected leaders, managers and key stakeholders involved in search for solutions to community problems and effective delivery mechanisms. System in turn subject to challenge through elections, referendums, deliberative forums, scrutiny functions and shifts in public opinion
<b>Preferred system for service delivery</b>	Hierarchical department or self-regulating profession	Private sector or tightly defined arms-length public agency	Menu of alternatives selected pragmatically
<b>Approach to public service ethos</b>	Public sector has monopoly on service ethos, and all public bodies have it.	Sceptical of public sector ethos (leads to inefficiency and empire building) – favours customer service	No one sector has a monopoly on public service ethos. Maintaining relationships through shared values is seen essential
<b>Relationship with 'higher' tiers of government</b>	Partnership relationship with central government over delivery	Upwards through performance contracts and key performance indicators	Complex and multiple: regional, national, European. Negotiated and flexible.

The first attack on this world view came from the New Public Management. Here the stress was initially on keeping down the cost of providing public services through stronger management disciplines such as across the board 'efficiency' savings, performance targets and the use of competition to select the cheapest service producer. Increasingly as part of a growing consumerist orientation in local government the debate about reinventing government called for responsiveness and choice in public services alongside the narrow focus on cost savings. Better management meant putting the customer first.

This ideology saw political leadership as important in setting direction but beyond that a potential source of inefficiency. Politicians were to set goals but should not dictate the means to achieve them. The key to managerialism is its emphasis on the rights of managers to manage against inappropriate interference from politicians, or for that matter, the special pleading of professional groups. Managerialism focuses on running 'what is', more effectively. The perspective of this era is that the welfare state is established but expensive and demanding in terms of tax payers' money so the key challenge is to make service delivery more efficient. The idea of an exclusive public sector ethos to guide providers is rejected in favour of a more open competition between producers from a variety of sectors to keep down costs and in order to encourage responsiveness to users. In some formations a particular additional role is given to consumers in defining the purposes of public services and even more strongly in assessing whether public services have provided satisfaction. The key to good management is clear goals that meet consumer needs, solid

contractual relations between service commissioners and service producers and effective monitoring of service delivery. It is at this final stage that including some measure of consumer satisfaction is seen as appropriate.

A third model of networked community governance began to take shape from the mid 1990s onwards. It takes its main inspiration from the perspective of new localism, outlined in the first section of this paper. In that sense it places far more emphasis than either the post war model or the New Public Management approaches on the search for what are the issues and what might be the solutions. Its reach is beyond the delivery of services. Its over-arching goal is the meeting of community needs as defined by the community within the context of the demands of a complex system of multi-level governance. Its aim is to achieve not narrow efficiency but Public Value, defined as the achievement of favoured outcomes by the use of public resources in the most effective manner available<sup>3</sup>. Given such a goal it is not surprising that no particular place is given to a public sector ethos but rather there is a broader commitment to maintaining system relationships in general. The choice of which sector or organisation should be involved in provision is also a pragmatic one.

The model demands a complex set of relationships with 'higher' tier government, local organisations and stakeholders. The relationships are intertwined and the systems of accountability are multiple. The political process is about the search for identifying problems, designing solutions and assessing their impact on the underlying problem. Beyond service delivery there is a focus on the purpose of services and

their impact on the problems they are addressing. Success is not a simple matter of efficient service delivery but rather the complex challenge of whether an outcome favourable to the community has been achieved. The model retains a strong commitment to managerialism in order to join up and steer a complex set of processes. This is a managerialism that goes beyond search for efficiency gains or a customer orientation to take on the challenge of working across boundaries and to take up the goal of holistic working.

Governing is concerned with the processes that create the conditions for ordered rule and collective action within the political realm. What is it that enables complex tasks to be managed, priorities set and decisions made? How in a complex environment with a vast range of actors can a sense of order and direction be established? How in the context of conflict over goal definitions and the practice of implementation is some capacity to act collectively maintained?

These challenges and issues central to governing in any time period and the Weberian paradigm – so long dominant in public administration – has provided a particular set of solutions to the challenges posed. In Weber's political thought three institutions are seen as essential to coping with the complexity of modernity and for delivering order to the governance process. They are political leadership, party and bureaucracy. Each of these institutions forces finds itself challenged in the new era. The Weberian perspective rested on viewing governing as a tight cluster of connected institutions the networked community governance perspective offers a

contrasting organising framework of wider, looser organisations joined through a complex mix of inter-dependencies. Advocates of networked community governance make a virtue out of these features.

Networked community governance frames issues by recognizing the complex architecture of government. In practice there are many centres and diverse links between many agencies of government at neighbourhood, local, regional and national and supranational levels. In turn each level has a diverse range of horizontal relationships with other government agencies, privatized utilities, private companies, voluntary organisations and interest groups. There is nothing to suggest that networked community governance should be any less susceptible to conflict regarding goal definitions and defining priorities than the traditional views of governing. Governance does not wish away conflict but it does recognise that there are a variety of ways in which it can be managed other than through a tight core of institutions such as bureaucracy and political party and a limited elite form of democracy.

Network governance tells us we can have democracy and management. Indeed that they are partners. The paradigm places its faith in a system of dialogue and exchange through networks. It is through the construction, modification, correction and adaptability of that system that democracy and management are reconciled. .  
But here are problems. Network partnerships can become 'talking shops' rather than a focus for intervention. Networks can be closed and unaccountable rather than open

and deliberative. Vigilance by all the partners in the system is central to ensuring that the promise of both democracy and management is delivered.

Networked local governance rests on a fuller and rounder vision of humanity than either traditional public administration or new public management. People are, it suggests, motivated by their involvement in networks and partnerships; that is by their relationships with others formed in the context of equal status and mutual learning. Some will find its vision attractive but self-styled realists or cynics may prefer to stick to established systems. But networked community governance is an achievable goal. However it requires a radical break from traditional public administration and New Public Management in its vision of the role of local government and its understanding of the context for governing and the core processes of governance.

### **Thinking about the future of local governance**

The governance challenge then is complex and multi-dimensional but now it is appropriate to focus more specifically on the role of local government. We have to think about how to reinvent local government to meet the new circumstances of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and develop a capacity for sustainable urban, suburban and rural lifestyles. We need a system capable of meeting the challenges and richness of the economic, social and ecological realities of our world now and for the next half of a century. It will have to be a very different local government in its core purposes,

control over resources and style of politics to become a plausible offer to be put to a public that remains appropriately sceptical.

Before we attempt to answer any questions about local government's functions, we need to first know what we want it to achieve. I would propose the following as the core outcomes needed for the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

- **To create the conditions for sustainable communities**

The Egan Report after extensive research and testing in focus groups<sup>4</sup> suggested the following definition:

*'Sustainable communities meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, contribute to a high quality of life and provide opportunity and choice. They achieve this in ways that make effective use of natural resources, enhance the environment, promote social cohesion and inclusion and strengthen economic prosperity'.<sup>5</sup>*

The report goes on to identify a range of components of sustainable communities. They include transport and connectivity, sustainable management of the environment, community safety and cohesion, economic performance and inclusion and a range of services to meet public need.

- **To sustain and facilitate the growth of more self-organising capacity in communities**

The second desired outcome from community leadership is that communities should feel more confident about governing themselves. The aim is to give people a stronger sense of involvement in their communities and a greater say over their lives. The rules of decision-making should give the relevant stakeholders certain rights but also certain obligations. They should also set out procedures for resolving disputes and getting to a legitimate decision. The aim is not simply to enable people to participate more; rather it demands participation with a purpose. That purpose is to engage people in making their communities better places both for themselves and for those around them. To make these governance rules real and capable of being achieved in practice may require active intervention, support, training and resources from government and other agencies.

One goal is about encouraging people to live in tolerance with others or feel a greater sense of neighbourliness. The ultimate aim however is both more specific and more profound. The agenda is about achieving a shift in the focus and operation of decision-making. It means more decisions taken locally and more community involvement in making decisions in the public interest. It does not mean an end to decision making responsibility at other levels or of other forms. It is about a shift in the balance between, respectively, national and local, representative and participative, and self-regarding and other-regarding politics.

- **To improve responsiveness and productivity in the delivery of locally-provided services**

The fundamental assumption, here, is that the rationale for government at all levels is to be a client – choosing the level and quality of service; and a market-maker – ensuring that a market place of providers exists and that competition is fair and quality assured. Local municipalities may in addition be direct providers – indeed some direct provision may be necessary to ensure the effective dynamic of the market. Achieving greater efficiency in public services means building on our current mixed economy of provision. It means a long-term enhanced role for private companies and voluntary organisations in service provision. Local government's main job is to define needs and service requirements and in managing markets of provision that may require direct provision on the part of local authorities and other public agencies and an active approach to procurement management.

Our current systems are just not geared up to deliver against these objectives on a consistent basis. They lack the scale and scope in its local government institutions to tackle the issues that could deliver sustainable communities. It does not have a living, working political system that can deliver community empowerment and it does not organise and promote the delivery of public services in a way that enables the challenge of increased productive efficiency to be met. To manage communities in our mobile and complex societies we need a governance capacity at a level both higher and lower than our current system delivers. We have a local government system designed for other purposes, in other – much different – days. If we want our

local government to deliver a radical vision of networked community governance it needs to set up in a new way.

What local government has delivered has varied over time, indeed one of its strengths is that it has adapted its role over time.<sup>6</sup> Systems of local government across the world provide different ranges of services and programmes, and although there are some common themes it is difficult to draw clear cut lessons.<sup>7</sup> The split in many countries between local, national and supra-national responsibilities is now even more complex in the context of globalisation and the rise of beyond nation state governance institutions.<sup>8</sup> There is no effective standard formula to tell you which services should be provided at which spatial level, although it may be possible to identify areas where economies of scale kick in and where the benefits run out. Unfortunately, finding the right solution to the question of which services to provide at which level, is not a matter of the simple application of well-known formulas.<sup>9</sup> The reality is that most systems of local government end up running services and programmes that reflect a complex mix of accident, design and evolution. So it is important not to be too defensive about what is currently done by local government, and instead to think radically about what it might do in the future.

Notwithstanding the difficulties outlined above, we need to have some broad guidelines to steer our search for what local government should do. We want a system that can deliver community governance and a territorial base for devolution. As suggested earlier there may be other service or function-based forms of devolution and democratic

oversight that could run alongside the territorial devolution expressed by local government. As a territorial base for networked community governance we should give priority to local government functions that:

*1. Have a strong spatial element relating to the territory covered by the unit of local government*

The argument for this guideline is straight-forward, since local government is by definition a government system that covers territories its functions should relate strongly to those with a strong spatial dimension.

*2. Require a strong element of integration in order to be successfully delivered*

Here the claim for local government in some form is driven by the need to co-ordinate and combine a complex range of actions, across a range of organisations and individuals. Area is one of the classic bases for integration, with client group (for example, children or the elderly) being its chief rival.

*3. Make an impact across the population and provide a focus for a system of general democratic oversight*

A third reason for saying something should be overseen by territorial government at the local level rather than nationally, or by some form of governance based around a function, is that the service or programme involved directly affects the whole population. The underlying argument here is that population-wide systems of democracy – i.e. those focused on territorial government – should have as a core focus the oversight of functions

that impact on a wide range of citizens. Territorial government should concentrate its efforts on those things that make a difference to most people in a particular location so that in the democratic judgements they come to their assessments of performance are driven by experience and the prospects for widespread engagement are enhanced.

Building on these guidelines, it is clear that at the heart of a local government system should be a set of functions that have a strong spatial dimension including: comprehensive transport management, effective management of land and housing development, an enhanced sustainable environment role, and waste disposal. Services and programmes that require a strong degree of integration in order to effectively meet challenges would also feature: including economic promotion (incorporating here both arts and tourism), social inclusion, community safety and local policing, 14-19 education and training, early years education and care, civil defence and resilience and public health promotion. Finally it will be possible to identify services and functions that require democratic oversight because they are central to the operation of neighbourhood and community life. This focus might include oversight of and challenge to the activities of public utilities and companies responsible for water, gas, telecoms and electricity. The operation of these services affects the liveability of an area and although there is no need for local government to run these services, it should be able to influence their operation in localities. Local government's oversight role would also stretch beyond a concern with life's practicalities to a concern with culture, heritage, and maintaining and enhancing the civic capacity of its area.

The functions outlined above provide an indicative rather than definitive list. Moreover in most instances local government's job will not be to run the services or programmes. This list is a way of making more specific and tangible to the public what is meant by local government as community leaders. A more detailed level of investigation and analysis would be needed to firm and clarify the nature of the responsibilities to be held. Crucial to my argument is that the functions identified are appropriate to the particular character of territorial government in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In the past and still today people ask for local or regional government to be given responsibility for major services such as health care, school education, housing provision. Having control of big spending and employing functions is seen as an expression of strong territorial government. But my aim is to give local government a core set of activities that make sense for it to run and oversee as a territorial agency. The focus is making local government strategically central to our governance system and the development of local communities.

The responsibilities outlined would create institutions capable of demanding considerable public attention and interest. The functions based around transport co-ordination, training and employment, environmental management and sustainability, and economic regeneration and inclusion address substantial and pressing public concerns. Plainly in all of those areas local government would be acting within the context of the actions and objectives of other levels of government. But, for example, the environmental role would stretch from a concern with clean neighbourhoods to tackling the need for greater sustainability in the operation of our towns and cities. Again the crime and justice agenda

would be focused not just on low level crime but also restorative justice, community healing and effective police accountability.

To deliver all of these roles, the powers and capacities of local government, in most countries, would have to be enhanced and their oversight and influence over other bodies operating in localities to provide services and programmes increased. A detailed investigation would be required to reveal the full range of powers that would have to be made available to local government in different circumstances and nations.

To summarise: six core roles would be key to local government to give concrete expression to networked community governance. The first would be **transport and mobility**, with local government in a position to affect your ability to move around – its job to ensure effective public and private transport management. Second, local government would be there to help **create the conditions for your employability** through child care, training programmes and economic regeneration. Third, local government would be there to **ensure your safety**, defend you from crime, and protect you from disasters in time of emergency and help to see that justice was done in your community. Local government's fourth job would extend to the **management of your environment**: its everyday maintenance, physical development and long-term ecological health. Fifth, local government would be there to give the best start to children in your community and help you and your family maintain a healthy lifestyle, through **caring for your community** to give shape to its ambitions, to reconcile interests and promote its concerns. Finally, local government would be there to **help maintain the cohesiveness of**

**your community** and at the same time support the cultural identity and civic capacity of the many groups and distinctive cultures of an area.

### **New structures**

The ways of working may in turn demand new institutions. This is a complex issue and there is a case for looking comprehensively at governance at neighbourhood, local and regional levels. The focus here, because of lack of time and space is on one potentially missing ingredient: more effective city-region governance.

We need a local government system that will help people see how they can shape the economic success, tackle the social problems and maintain the ecological balance of their communities. A reform package that provided people with the prospect that institutions would be created that they could effectively influence and that would in turn have powers to make a difference at a level and over issues they care about, is something that they might vote for it.

When the option of a full-blown regional assembly in the North East was rejected late last year it took the devolution debate in England back to square one. Did it open up space at the same time for the return off the idea of building a more strategic level of local government around city regions rather than the administrative regions that previous plans proposed?

A starting question is the definition of a city region. The basic idea is to build around a core set of city or set of towns. The outer boundary of a city-region might be defined refer river basins, travel to work or economic connections, or focus on more cultural and political issues. A major issue is that some city region boundaries work better in some parts of the England rather than others. So a key question to address is if the system could offer universal coverage and if not what should be done for those areas that fall outside a city region. A third big issue is to determine the functions of a city region. Transport issues arguably operate at that scale. Issues of employment and economic regeneration function at that scale as the reality of sub-regional strategies produced by the Regional Development Agencies in England illustrate. Moreover the issues of environmental sustainability, community safety, as well as others, might be better managed by a governmental structure at that level.

How to build a city region? A simple option might be to build around the previous structures of metropolitan municipalities and create ad hoc over-arching arrangements at that level. . This option is attractive in some ways and builds on some existing practice but it does not provide a clear base for developing a solution outside metropolitan areas and will perhaps struggle to attract public support for and attention to decision-making at that level. More radical options should be considered.

You could go for full-blown city-regions-premised on journey to work/ leisure/shopping patterns - but the scale of these would be very big. Using Manchester as the reference point such a city-region might stretch way beyond the boundaries of existing Greater

Manchester boundaries to incorporate parts of Derbyshire, Cheshire and Lancashire and indeed even some parts of Yorkshire!.

One further option worth considering could be to 'super-size' build around towns and cities and counties. These levels of territory that mean something to many people under our current arrangements. The idea of living in Manchester stretches beyond those people who live in the immediate boundaries of Manchester; as does the idea of living in Lancashire stretch beyond the established boundaries of Lancashire.

What about the governance options. There are four to consider:

- Virtual regions: created ad hoc to meet particular challenges, built on networks and partnership, allowing issue to dictate spatial scale
- Voluntary co-operation : focussed on soft issues of shared regional concern, joint agreements as appropriate, boundaries fixed, an associational model
- Mandated co-operation: formal requirement to produce local agreements on issues of key strategic concern , expressed through some collective forum( such as an assembly of indirectly elected members) and made concrete through local contracts, fixed boundaries
- Formal government structure: an elected body, fixed range of decision-making responsibilities and boundaries

Each option has strength and weaknesses (see Table 2)

**Table 2: City region governance options**

<b>Form</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Virtual region</b>	Flexibility, task focus, good at removing obstacles in positive sum context	No guarantee of co-operation in tougher situations, weak form of partnership, little public accountability, needs central funding to make work and fund
<b>Voluntary association</b>	Builds on established relationships, regular part of governance setting	Little guarantee of co-operation in tougher situations, partnership more robust but limited to local authorities, weak public accountability
<b>Mandated local contact</b>	Requires commitment and has tool to cement it, raises explicitness of agenda	Improved but largely internal accountability, could cope with more difficult issues, only moderate public accountability,.
<b>Formal elected government</b>	Formal, clear system of public accountability, legitimacy to drive decisions, could connect to wider range of stakeholders	Potential disabling conflict with other tiers if responsibilities not clear and powers not appropriate

At this point it is clear that this paper has reached the limits of what it can argue without more detailed comparative analysis and study. I hope, however, to have provided some frameworks for thinking through issues that will be helpful in meeting that challenge.

## References

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<sup>1</sup> Perri 6 et al (2002) *Towards holistic governance* London: Palgrave, p46.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Kelly , G and Muers, S ( 2002) *Creating public value :an analytical framework* London : cabinet office

<sup>3</sup> Moore, M (1995)*Creating public value* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

<sup>4</sup> Research undertaken by MORI and quoted in The Egan Review (2004), *Skills for Sustainable Communities*, London: ODPM

<sup>5</sup> The Egan Review, op. cit., p18

<sup>6</sup> See Hunt, T. (2004) *Building Jerusalem: the rise and fall of the Victorian city*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; and Sheldrake, J. (1989) *Municipal Socialism*, Aldershot: Avebury

<sup>7</sup> See Norton, A. (1994) *International Handbook of Local and Regional Government*, Aldershot: Edward Elgar; and Denters, B. and Rose, L . (2005) *Comparing Local Governance*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

<sup>8</sup> Stoker, G. (2004) *Transforming Local Governance: from Thatcherism to New Labour*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

<sup>9</sup> The evidence on, for example, economies of scale is not sufficient to clinch an argument for provision at one spatial level rather than another because so much depends on how the service is provided, as well as a range of other factors. See Travers, T., Jones, G. and Burnham, J. (1993) *The Impact of Population Size on Local Authority Costs and Effectiveness*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation