



From the
Secretary of State

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Andrew Lewis
Co-ordinator, Tyne & Wear City Region
c/o Government Office for the North East
Citygate
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NE1 4WH

Dear Andrew

Cities Strategy – Results of expressions of interest exercise

I am writing to advise you that I have announced today the areas that have been selected as pathfinders for the cities strategy outlined in our Green Paper – A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work.

We need to test this strategy before considering a wider rollout and I am very pleased to say that you have been selected as one of the pathfinder areas.

We have assessed expressions of interest against the criteria set out in the guidance to areas that were invited to submit an EOI. It is clear from your proposal that you have made good progress in bringing together local partners and seeking to align them behind a shared set of priorities. I think you still have further to go in articulating how you would use the consortium to innovate and tailor services in response to local needs, and how this would drive up outcomes.

To some extent this may reflect the scope of your proposal, covering as it does a number of areas within the city-region. These are issues that we will need to discuss with you as you move on to working up a more detailed delivery plan. I would also stress that selection as a pathfinder does not imply acceptance of all elements of your EOI, but we are committed to working with you to help you develop and deliver the vision you have set out for your area.

As a pathfinder area you are eligible for a share of the £5m pot of 'seed corn' funding. This is designed to help kick start the development of your consortium as you begin working up your detailed delivery plan over the next few months. If this next phase of development is successful, you should aim to be agreeing your delivery plan with us by the end of 2006, with a view to the consortium becoming operational by April 2007.

We anticipate that the seed-corn funding will be split between this financial year and 2007/08. As one of the initial steps in developing your delivery plan, you will need to consider how you would make use of this funding. The project team in DWP will be contacting you shortly, and will be happy to help with this or any other questions you may have about the next steps.

Finally I would like to thank you for the work you have put into your proposal and I would like to wish you every success as you develop your plans to ensure that everyone who can work has the help and support they need to do so.

Best wishes,

JOHN HUTTON