1. Conference welcomes;
   1. The adoption at Autumn Federal Conference of Motion F10 “A Fairer Share for All” and the Party’s commitment to a £50bn rebalancing fund for regional economic development administered by devolved authorities.
   2. The Party’s endorsement of the Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan as a basis for major investment in infrastructure across the North of England
   3. The work of, for example, the UK 2070 Commission and IPPR North, which call for major new policy measures to address regional disparity and recognise that;
      1. The relative affluence of London and the South-East is based on its ability to drain talent from elsewhere in the country with the resultant unsustainable pressures on housing and infrastructure.
      2. Over reliance on the London and the South-East as the driver of national economic growth is unfair to those in other regions and is no longer in the best interests of the nation.
      3. True devolution is fundamental to rebalance the economy for disadvantaged communities in the UK and secure the long-term funding necessary to achieve it.
2. Conference believes that;
   1. Levelling up productivity and average income levels across the UK is vital to resolve underlying resentment in the regions.
   2. Borrowing to achieve this is an investment in the country’s future and not subject to revenue expenditure constraints.
   3. The benefits of devolution have now been demonstrated, most notably through the powers devolved to  London and Greater Manchester, creating a demand for equality from those, often rural, areas left behind..
   4. Solutions such as “One Yorkshire” (which sought to address the issue of areas left behind) were rejected in favour of a “divide and rule” approach to restrict the policies and finances available to devolved authorities.
   5. Fair and democratic allocation of the Liberal Democrats economic Rebalancing Fund should be based on the Barnet Formula and necessitates a devolution settlement that covers all of England.
   6. Regional regeneration requires strategies beyond the life of any single Parliament or local authority administration and is hindered by the short-termism and adversarial politics inherent in the first past the post electoral system.
   7. Potential uses of the Rebalancing Fund will involve projects across several devolved authorities. Current intra-regional co-ordination lacks democratic control or oversight helping to maintain Westminster’s iron grip. To counter this requires a democratically accountable alternative to effectively deploy the Rebalancing Fund.
3. Conference notes.
   1. That the UK 2070 Initial Report and IPPR reports on region disparities suggest that cohesive strategy development should be based on English super-regions or “Provinces”; one of which is contiguous with our three English regions, NE & NW England, Yorkshire and the Humber. The Transport for the North strategy also covers the same “Province” as does the “Northern Powerhouse”, despite its tendency to focus on City Regions.
4. Conference Proposes;
   1. A temporary Devolution Commission to facilitate the roll-out of devolved powers within 2 years to all top tier local authorities using the powers currently vested in Greater Manchester as a baseline. To ensure a fairer exercise of devolved powers, future elections to these bodies should be conducted using the Single Transferable Vote.
   2. That authorities taking on newly devolved powers should be led by the leader of that Council rather than an elected Mayor except where there is a clear local mandate for initiating or retaining a Mayoralty
   3. The Devolution Commission may need to review the ability of small unitary authorities to exercise devolved power and, in such cases, a “Combined Authority” model may be appropriate.
   4. That existing “Combined Authorities” be retained and should be able to enter in future alternative partnership arrangements should they so wish.
   5. That the three Northern Regional Parties should maintain their collaboration by identifying priorities for capital investment in the Future of the North including allocation of the Rebalancing Fund and effective use of funds from other sources such as the EU
      1. Accelerated investment in the North’s digital infrastructure
      2. A “Regeneration through Innovation” strategy involving the establishment of Centres of Excellence where Universities work collaboratively together and with industry on research and business incubation in fields such as;
         * Life sciences.
         * Creative industries
         * Green economy industries
         * IT and Artificial Intelligence
         * Rural Industries and Tourism
         * Manufacturing
      3. The manufacturing industry strategy should focus on sectors with existing strengths and sectors where productivity improvements will enable the UK to become more competitive.
   6. That a Grand Committee should be created comprising elected members from all parts of the North with a political balance reflecting that of its constituent bodies. Meetings of this Grand Committee would move in rotation throughout the North utilising existing Council Chambers.
      * + Its role should be to facilitate co-operative working on matters affecting the North as a whole or sub regions within the North
        + It should be the servant of its constituent authorities’ bodies, not their master, utilising a “bottom up” approach to respond to sub-regional needs and concerns.
        + It should provide a collective voice for the North to drive the economic revival of the North and secure parity of funding from Westminster.
        + Effort should be made to achieve cross-party consensus to ensure continuity of purpose and long-term strategies across electoral cycles