

Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership
(On behalf of Northern Powerhouse 11)

Invitation to Tender

Policy Support for NP11

August 2022

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of the brief

On behalf of the NP11 (Northern Powerhouse 11) group of Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership is seeking to procure capacity to support the development and delivery of NP11's policy and evidence programme.

Initial thinking is for a senior individual contracted for 24 hours per week, embedded within the NP11 team, with additional support aligned with the project objectives (see below) as required; however, we are open to alternative arrangements that add value. The contract is expected to complete by 30th September 2023.

Working closely with the thematic and workstream leads, activity will include supporting the development and delivery of the NP11's Northern Evidence Network; provide policy input required to meet the needs of the NP11, Northern LEPs and partners; develop and deliver responses to various calls for evidence; support the delivery of commissioned policy activity; and some administrative support for the secretariat function of NP11.

The successful bidder will be required to deliver services in accordance with all tender documents and the contract to be placed with the successful bidder. Tenderers are requested to study the specification in detail and ensure that the specified requirements can be met and thus your understanding of our requirements is reflected in your Pricing Schedule return.

The contract is expected to commence **w/c 3rd October 2022**, with the exact dates to be agreed depending on the agreement between the successful provider and The LEP, on behalf of NP11.

The principal benefits anticipated by The LEP in this procurement include;

- Ability to maximise opportunities for best value and efficient services
- To allow bidders to explore efficiencies, which may be possible by suggesting innovative and cost-effective solutions
- Presentation of cost savings to The LEP in order to maximise economical operational efficiency and value for money

- A resultant contract that meets the tender requirements and supports NP11 with their ambition

The Contract will be awarded for an initial period of 12 months, with an option to extend for another 12 months, subject to funding and based on satisfactory performance through continuous monitoring and performance review.

During the contract life, the successful bidder will need to achieve continuous improvement. Failure to do so may result in the contract being terminated.

Background to the project

The NP11 brings together the 11 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) from across the North, working together for the North. The NP11 is a business-led body that works in partnership with civic leaders across the North and with Government to drive prosperity, improve lives and attract investment. It is Chaired by Sir Roger Marsh OBE DL.

The Northern Powerhouse agenda has been significant in galvanising collaborative working across the North in pursuit of shared priorities, and in enhancing the profile and confidence of the North to secure greater productivity, competitiveness, and investment. However, following the Levelling Up White Paper, the LEP Review, and the 2022 Conservative Party leadership election, this is a complex and evolving political and institutional landscape. On the one hand, the role of the regional economic growth agenda has become less clear, and a focused effort is required to ensure it remains a key policy priority. On the other, the LEP Review and recently completed Pan Regional Partnership Review have created new opportunities as well as new challenges: structural changes to deepen and broaden the governance of PRPs, and an emphasis on the development of regional economic evidence, have important implications for the NP11's partnerships, particularly with Mayors and Transport for the North, and the NP11's activity, particularly the Northern Evidence Network.

Over the past year, the NP11 has made significant strides forward. It has agreed a series of policy priorities to grow the North's economy, focusing particularly on clean growth, trade and investment, innovation, digital, and placemaking. It organised the landmark Convention of the North with NP11 Summits and, working with Metro Mayors and Council Leaders across the North, developed a joint submission to the last Spending Review as a follow up to the Manifesto for the North. Recent achievements include the commitment to shifting R&D spending to the North and locally co-

designed innovation schemes in the recent Levelling Up White Paper; the success of the two Northern industrial decarbonisation cluster bids; the establishment of the multi-agency Place & Culture Partnership; and the strong policy fit between the emphasis on metrics and evaluation in the Levelling Up Missions and the Northern Evidence Network. The emergence of the NEN has also provided a strong framework for collaboration with Transport for the North on the update of the NPIER as a key strategic document.

Procurement Process

This procurement exercise is being conducted as a below threshold open tender.

2. REQUIREMENT

Objectives

In the current phase of work, the NP11 is focused on a programme of thought leadership, partnership working with the business community, and stakeholder engagement with Government. This is aligned with a small number of priority policy workstreams: trade and investment; clean growth; innovation; placemaking; and digital.

Further, the NP11 is developing and delivering a Northern Evidence Network, bringing together evidence leads from Northern LEPs and Combined Authorities with partners such as TfN, Northern universities, the Office for National Statistics and central Government. In line with the mandate for LEPs to engage collaboratively in strategic economic planning set out in the recent LEP Review, the Network will support the long-term growth of the economy of the North, acting as a voice for the North on all issues concerning data and evidence, with three initial workstreams: improving the flow, co-ordination and presentation of data and evidence; a long-term research programme; and partnership development. A summary of the programme is attached at Appendix 4. These workstreams are led by members of the NEN, with oversight of the overall programme with the NEN steering group.

In order to support this, the NP11 are seeking capacity for the following.

- i. Northern Evidence Network (c.40% of project time)
 - Providing coordination and intelligent project support to the Northern Evidence Network working with the Steering Group, supporting the workstreams to develop activity, and ensuring it supports the NP11's wider policy programme
 - This support will include tracking actions, following up with partners, project development, and undertaking first pass scoping and research
 - Specific outputs include the specification for the NEN long term research programme and for the Northern evidence dashboard, with outcomes including strengthened co-ordination between NEN with other data developers in the region and nationally, enhanced methods of data and evidence sharing between the NP11 partners, and strategies for improved dissemination of evidence across the North.
- ii. Priority policy workstreams (c. 30% of project time)
 - Providing coordination and intelligent project support for the clean growth and digital policy workstreams, ensuring alignment with the NP11's wider policy programme
 - This will include tracking actions, following up with partners, providing policy input, and producing supporting material
- iii. Cross cutting support (c. 30% of project time)
 - Develop and deliver policy responses for the NP11's activity related to Government consultations, calls for evidence, and other cross-cutting policy topics
 - Provide relevant advice and support to the NP11 Director and Board, including production of briefings, reports and presentations
 - Fulfil the secretariat function for NP11, including taking minutes of Board and other key meetings and providing diary support and progress chasing for the NP11 staff team
 - Identifying knowledge requirements from the leadership or policy workstreams and feeding these into the NEN for support

Scope and exclusions

The project includes all of the deliverables and technical requirements listed above plus any subsequently agreed (in writing) as part of project inception which will contribute to the objectives stated above. We are open to resourcing proposals that add value.

The successful agency must demonstrate an appreciation of the budget limitations and political sensitivities within which the NP11 operates as a publicly funded body. Any proposals/ recommendations must represent cost-effectiveness and value for taxpayers' money.

Budget

The maximum budget available for this project, including all of the deliverables listed above plus any associated expenses, is £100,000.

A breakdown of costs to deliver the requirements of this brief using your proposed approach is requested as part of your tender submission, setting out resource allocated to the above objectives.

Project management and sign-off

The key contact with day-to-day oversight of this project is David Levene, Director of the NP11. There will also be a need to engage with the group of Northern LEP Chief Executives, as well as the NP11 Board of Northern LEP Chairs, and LEP leads for the workstreams set out above.

3. TIMESCALES

Activity	Date
Issue brief for procurement	26 th August 2022
Deadline for queries	7 th September 2022
Deadline for submissions	16 th September 2022
Clarification of bids & Interviews (if determined applicable)	w/c 19 th September 2022
Bidders notified of contract award	w/c 26 th September 2022
Appointment	w/c 3 rd October 2022
The project will be completed in full by 30 th September 2023.	

4. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Bidders are required to submit tenders in an electronic format (i.e. MS Word/PDF) of no more than four pages A4 detailing how you would approach this commission, including:

- Your understanding of the brief and your ability address key challenges, including provision of adequate capacity
- Your understanding of NP11 and the specific political environment in which it operates.
- Your experience of delivering work of similar focus, scale and budget
- Names, job titles and short role descriptions of the people who would work on this commission, noting their technical capabilities
- A breakdown of costs, including details of your day rate and estimated days/ hours

Submissions should be sent via email FAO David Levene to:
tenders@cheshireandwarrington.com

The closing date and time for the receipt of submissions and all requested documentation relating to this stage is **1700 hours (5pm) on 16th September**. Late submissions will not be accepted.

5. EVALUATION OF TENDERS

Any tender which fails to include the declaration by tenderer, attached to this document, will not be eligible for scoring.

Each proposal will be scored against the following evaluation questions, weighted as follows:

Evaluation question	Score
Understanding of and ability to carry out the requirements of the brief	40
Understanding of the NP11 and the political environment in which it operates	20
Expertise and experience of nominated individuals, including their experience of delivering similar projects	20
Price & Value for Money	20
Total	100

Each evaluation question will be scored using the following scoring criteria:

Scoring criteria	Score
Failure to respond or irrelevant information which fails to meet the requirement	0
Response is inadequate, significantly failing to meet the requirements.	1
Response is unsatisfactory partially meets the requirement	2
Response is acceptable and meets the minimum requirement	3
Response is good - better than merely acceptable	4
Response is excellent, exceeds the requirement and gives added value	5

Clarifications maybe sought in writing, or by interview/presentation from the suppliers and scores adjusted accordingly. Full or partial proposals that in the opinion of The LEP are unrealistically low or not reasonable sustainable (in terms of Quality or Price) may be rejected.

NOTE: If any criteria within the specification document are classed as non-compliant The LEP will not be able to take your tender through to the next stage. If, however, you state that you are non-compliant and are able to provide an alternative solution, the LEP reserve the right to consider the alternative solution. No guarantee will be given that the alternative solution will be accepted.

6. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Payments for services covered by this invitation to tender will be on submission of appropriate invoices made out to Cheshire & Warrington LEP Ltd, subject to CWLEP's standard payment terms. Payment against approved invoices will normally be within a maximum of 30 days. Invoicing arrangements will be agreed with the successful provider following the award of the contract.

7. CONTRACT

A contract will be awarded, by Cheshire & Warrington LEP Ltd, on behalf of NP11, to the tenderer whose proposal is deemed to be the most economically advantageous subject to agreement on conditions of that contract. Please note that the CWLEP reserves the right to cancel the tender process at any time prior to a contract being entered into. CWLEP is not bound to accept the lowest price, or any tender submitted.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION & QUERIES

If you require any clarifications relating to the information contained within this invitation to tender, please contact David Levene (contact details below) before **7th September (1700) 2022**. Responses to requests for clarification may not materially change any of the elements of the tenders submitted. Any additional information provided by the LEP, as a result of requests for clarification, will be made available to all potential bidders via the CWLEP website : [Tenders - Cheshire and Warrington](#). All communication received from potential providers will be treated in strict confidence but are subject to this paragraph.

David Levene
Director, NP11
07971 516 829
david.levene@np11.org.uk

9. INSTRUCTIONS TO TENDERERS

Bidders:

- Shall either destroy or return all documentation related to the tender process if The LEP so directs
- Shall ensure that tenders are both technically and arithmetically correct. Should The LEP discover any arithmetical errors in the bidder's tender prices then these shall be pointed out to the bidder who shall immediately correct the errors or they shall be asked to withdraw its tender or hold the prices submitted, at the discretion of The LEP
- Shall not alter the ITT documents. Tender proposals will be deemed to comply entirely with the terms stated therein unless the bidder states otherwise in writing. If any alteration is made or if these instructions are not fully complied with, the tender proposal may be rejected
- Will be deemed to have satisfied themselves as to the sufficiency of their tender proposal and to have included in it all costs which may be incurred in the delivery of the services. They shall also be responsible for satisfying themselves as to the accuracy of all information associated with the contract and that all eventualities have been included

The contract will be entered into on the basis of the total tender package (inclusive of VAT) which will be included as part of the Contract Documents including any amounts or additions made and agreed during the tender proposal assessment period. The LEP reserves the right not to contract or contract only in part with any bidder.

The information supplied within this ITT and accompanying documents reflects The LEP's current view of the services required. Whilst the information in this ITT has been prepared in good faith, it does not purport to be comprehensive or to have been independently verified.

This ITT is issued on the basis that:

- The LEP does not accept any liability, responsibility or duty of care to any tenderer for the adequacy, accuracy or completeness of this ITT or for anything said or done in relation to the procurement to which this ITT relates;
- The LEP does not make any (express or implied) representation or warranty either about the information contained in this ITT or on which it is based, or about any written or oral information that may be made available to any bidder;

- Nothing contained in this ITT constitutes an inducement or incentive in any way to persuade an interested person to pursue its interest, submit a tender proposal or enter into any contract;
- Neither this ITT nor any information supplied by The LEP should be relied on as a promise or representation as to its future requirements;
- This ITT is neither an offer capable of acceptance nor is it intended to create a binding contract nor is it capable of creating such a contract by any subsequent actions

The LEP reserves the right to suspend, cancel or withdraw the tender process at any time and will not be responsible for any costs incurred to potential suppliers.

10. TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR TENDERS

Please see below for the terms and conditions of this tender. Through submitting a bid on this tender, you are committing to meet and abide by these terms and conditions:

10.1 Confidentiality and Disclaimer

This ITT is not an offer capable of acceptance, but represents a definition of specific legal service requirements and an invitation to submit a response addressing such requirements.

Neither the issue of the ITT to you, your preparation and submission of a tender, or the subsequent receipt and evaluation of your tender by The LEP commits The LEP to award a contract to you or any other bidder, even if all requirements stated in the ITT are met. The LEP is not responsible directly or indirectly for any costs incurred by your firm in responding to this ITT and participating in The LEP's procurement process.

All firms shall keep strictly confidential any and all information contained in this ITT, and other information or documents made available to it by or on behalf of The LEP in connection with this ITT. The firms shall not disclose, nor allow any such information to be disclosed. Submission of a formal response to this ITT will confirm your agreement to observe these confidentiality requirements.

Contact by the firms with The LEP during the bidding process should only be via the contact stated within this ITT. Respondents shall not offer or give any consideration of any kind to any employee or representative of The LEP as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, any act in relation to the obtaining or execution of this or any other contract with The LEP.

10.2 Material Misrepresentation

The LEP shall rely on the information provided by the bidder in relation to its offer. In providing the services as specified in the Invitation to Tender documents the successful bidder/tenderer shall comply with the contents of its offer as failure in this respect may constitute a material breach of contract.

10.3 Collusive Bidding

Collusive bidding is unacceptable to The LEP. Any tenderer that is caught by The LEP to be circumventing rules or the law during this tender process will automatically be disqualified from the tender process.

This applies to any bidder who:

- a).** Fixes or adjusts the amount of his bid by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other person, or
- b).** Communicates to any person other than The LEP the amount or approximate amount of his proposal (except where such disclosure is made in confidence in order to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the tender for instance) or,
- c).** Enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other person* that he shall refrain from bidding or as to the amount of any bid to be submitted, or
- d).** Offers or agrees to pay or give, or does pay or gives any sum of money, inducement or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any person for doing or having done, or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any Offer or proposed Offer for the Services or any act or omission will be disqualified (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to The LEP and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a bidder may attract)

*NB Sub-contracting is permissible where the bidder believes that this will enhance their proposal, however this must be clearly stated.

10.4 Bribery

Bribery means any offence under the Bribery Act 2010 or related Laws creating offences in relation to offering, promising or giving a bribe or requesting, agreeing to receive or receiving a bribe

The Contractor agrees with the Client that this Contract will operate on the basis of zero tolerance being shown towards any Fraud and/or Bribery. The Contractor shall take all reasonable steps, in accordance with Good Industry Practice, to prevent Fraud and Bribery by Staff and the Contractor (including its shareholders, members, directors) in connection with the receipt of monies from the Client and with the operation of this Contract.

10.5 TUPE

The following provisions regarding TUPE are extremely important. Please ensure that you read them carefully.

The LEP expects that TUPE will **not** apply to this contract.

In cases of TUPE Tenderers are advised to seek independent professional advice on the effect of TUPE. Tenderers must be prepared to accept all liabilities which may arise as a consequence of the application of TUPE, should it apply. The LEP takes no liability in regards to inaccuracy of TUPE information provided in this tender.

When submitting a Tender, Tenderers are required to include all costs relating to TUPE in their submission.

10.6 Data Protection Act Compliance

The successful bidder must comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and all applicable law concerning the processing of personal data and privacy. Full contract terms will be made available to the successful bidder.

The LEP privacy notice can be found at: <https://cheshireandwarrington.com/privacy-policy/>

10.7 Social Value

The LEP's vision to be the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK, closely aligns to the Government's social value priorities.

Under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 the LEP must consider:

- a) how what is being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area where it exercises its functions, and

- b) how, in conducting the process of procurement, it might act with a view to securing that improvement.

In addition, the National Procurement Policy Statement ([National_Procurement_Policy_Statement.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) sets out the following national priorities that should be considered alongside individual local priorities:

- creating new businesses, new jobs and new skills;
- tackling climate change and reducing waste, and
- improving supplier diversity, innovation and resilience.

All successful suppliers must be willing to work closely with the LEP throughout the contract duration to assist them in achieving both their vision and their social value obligations.

APPENDIX 1 - FORM OF TENDER – TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED

Declaration by Tenderer

ITT Title: NP11 Policy Support

1. I, *[insert name]*, certify that I am the person duly authorised to sign tenders for and on behalf of *[insert company name]*, the tenderer, and having read the documents, offer to supply the goods, services or works:
 - as set out in the specification and accompanying tender documents, samples and/or drawings
 - under the terms and conditions indicated
 - at the price (or prices) specified in the attached tender documentation
2. It is agreed that any or other terms and conditions of contract or any caveats, assumptions, reservations or exclusions that may be printed on correspondence emanating from the tender, or any Contract resulting from this tender, shall not be applicable to this tender or agreement.
3. I certify that this is a bona fide tender and that I have not fixed or adjusted the amount of the tender by, or under, or in accordance with any agreement with any other person. I have not done, and undertake that I will not do at any time before the hour and date specified for the return of the tender, any of the following acts:
 - Communicate to a person other than The LEP, the amount or approximate amount of the proposed tender, except where the disclosure, in confidence, of the approximate amount of the tender was necessary to obtain insurance premium quotations required for the preparation of the tender
 - Enter into an agreement or arrangement with any other person that he/she will refrain from tendering or to the amount of any tender to be submitted
 - Offer, or pay, or give, or agree to pay any sum of money or valuable consideration, directly or indirectly to any person for doing, or having done, or causing to be done in relation to any tender or proposed tender, for the said work, any act or thing of the sort described above
4. I further certify that the principles described in paragraph 3 have been, or will be, brought to the attention of all subcontractors, suppliers and associated companies providing services or materials connected with the tender and any contract entered

into with the subcontractors, suppliers or associated companies will be made on the basis of the compliance with the above principles by all parties.

5. I understand that The LEP reserves the right, unless the tenderer stipulates to the contrary in the tender, to accept such portion thereof as The LEP may decide. The LEP is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender.
6. I have obeyed the rules regarding confidentiality of tenders and will continue to do so as long as they apply.
7. I can confirm that I accept that any breach of any of the conditions could lead to any tender being rejected or to the rescission of the Contract by The LEP.

Authorised Signatory	
Date	
Name in BLOCK LETTERS	
Job Title	
Telephone Number	
E-mail address	

Please ensure that the form is completed and signed before being returned with any other supporting documentation requested, by the due date and time. Use the checklist to ensure that you have submitted the relevant documents.

APPENDIX 2 - SUPPLIER TECHNICAL QUESTIONS & ANSWER SHEET - TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED

1. COMPANY DETAILS

Please provide company details within the table below:

Question number	Question	Response
1(i)	Full name of the potential supplier submitting the information	
1(ii)	Registered office address (if applicable)	
1(iii)	Registered website address (if applicable)	
1(iv)	Trading status a) public limited company b) limited company c) limited liability partnership d) other partnership e) sole trader f) third sector g) other (please specify your trading status)	
1(v)	Date of registration in country of origin	
1(vi)	Company registration number (if applicable)	
1(vii)	Charity registration number (if applicable)	
1(viii)	Head office DUNS number (if applicable)	
1(ix)	Registered VAT number	

2. Understanding of and ability to carry out the requirements of the brief (40%)

ANSWER FEEDBACK

3. Understanding of the NP11 and the political environment in which it operates (20%)

ANSWER FEEDBACK

4. Expertise and experience of nominated individuals, including their experience of delivering similar projects (20%)

Please also supply CVs of nominated individuals

ANSWER FEEDBACK

5. Please detail the price and value for money for this project (20%)

ANSWER FEEDBACK

APPENDIX 3 – CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT

The LEP contract for the Supply of Services shall form the basis of the main terms and conditions of the contract. The successful bidder must thoroughly read, agree and comply with the Contract Terms & Conditions Agreement. The main terms and conditions of the contract will be shared with the successful bidder.

APPENDIX 4 – NEN PROGRAMME SUMMARY

See Below

Northern Evidence Network: An Action Plan for 2022

Summary

The NP11 LEPs have agreed to develop the Northern Evidence Network (NEN) in partnership with Transport for the North (TfN) and Government, engaging with other Northern and national stakeholders.

This responds to the report completed in 2021 which identified a range of opportunities to improve the co-ordination and production of economic intelligence available within the north at Northern, regional, and local scales, and to strengthen the ownership and input into key northern research and strategy products including the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER) programme.

Areas of focus

In the research, there was strong support expressed for four key areas of focus for the Network by NP11 Board and Chief Executives:

- Data analysis and best practice sharing
- Long-term research programme scoping
- Active engagement with key data providers
- NPIER programme, including the update of the NPIER itself

Taking action

This support has been sustained in early activities of the NEN.

Immediate delivery has been the representation of the NEN on the Steering Group for the preparatory phase of the NPIER update, support for a successful programme of 11 LEP scale engagement meetings and direct engagement with the TfN project lead and consultancy team on approach and emerging findings. This co-ordination will continue through the next phases of the NPIER project.

The NEN has also held two full meetings and established working groups to develop detailed action plans around the first three workstreams during the first quarter of 2022. The aim of these workstream plans has been to identify actions that could be taken forward together over the next six months, supported as part of the core activity of NP11 and involving local LEP's and other Northern partners.

The three workstreams are also being used to identify a strategic programme, supported by additional resources from Government. A proposal will be developed for submission to Government for additional support over and above core NP11 resources, as detailed below.

The Action Plans outputted from this phase of discussion are attached to this report. Within the plan, timelines to January 2023 are identified, setting out key deliverables that will be taken forward collaboratively supported by NP11 core resources some activities within workstreams 1 and 3, subject to costings and funding approval, and those that will be prepared across the programme to be 'good to go' should a wider resource package be secured.

Key deliverables to be supported by NP11 core	Key deliverables dependent on wider investment
Establishment of NEN meeting cycle including core partners in LEPs/CAs, TfN and CLGU	Implementation of partners engagement plan
Co-ordinated support for NPIER programme update	Addition of wider network of partners into NEN structure to enhance reach and co-ordination
Creation and curation of Teams group	Research specification and implementation of Northern research programme
Specification of Levelling Up dashboard	Delivery of intelligence and research communications and dissemination plan
Data sharing and licensing plan	Implementation of data sharing and licensing plan
Partner engagement plans	Lunch and learn sessions
	Commissioning of dashboard

Leadership and co-ordination

Work to date has been led and co-ordinated by the North East LEP on behalf of the NP11 partnership, with the active engagement of TfN, CLGU and NP11 Team. GMCA and WYCA were members of the Steering Group which led the initial phase of work.

Additional capacity has been provided through a consultancy contract with Metro Dynamics.

Moving forward it is envisaged that each of the three workstreams will be led by individual NEN members with particular expertise, supported by broader members of the NEN. These workstreams can and should also involve other partners from across the North or national bodies.

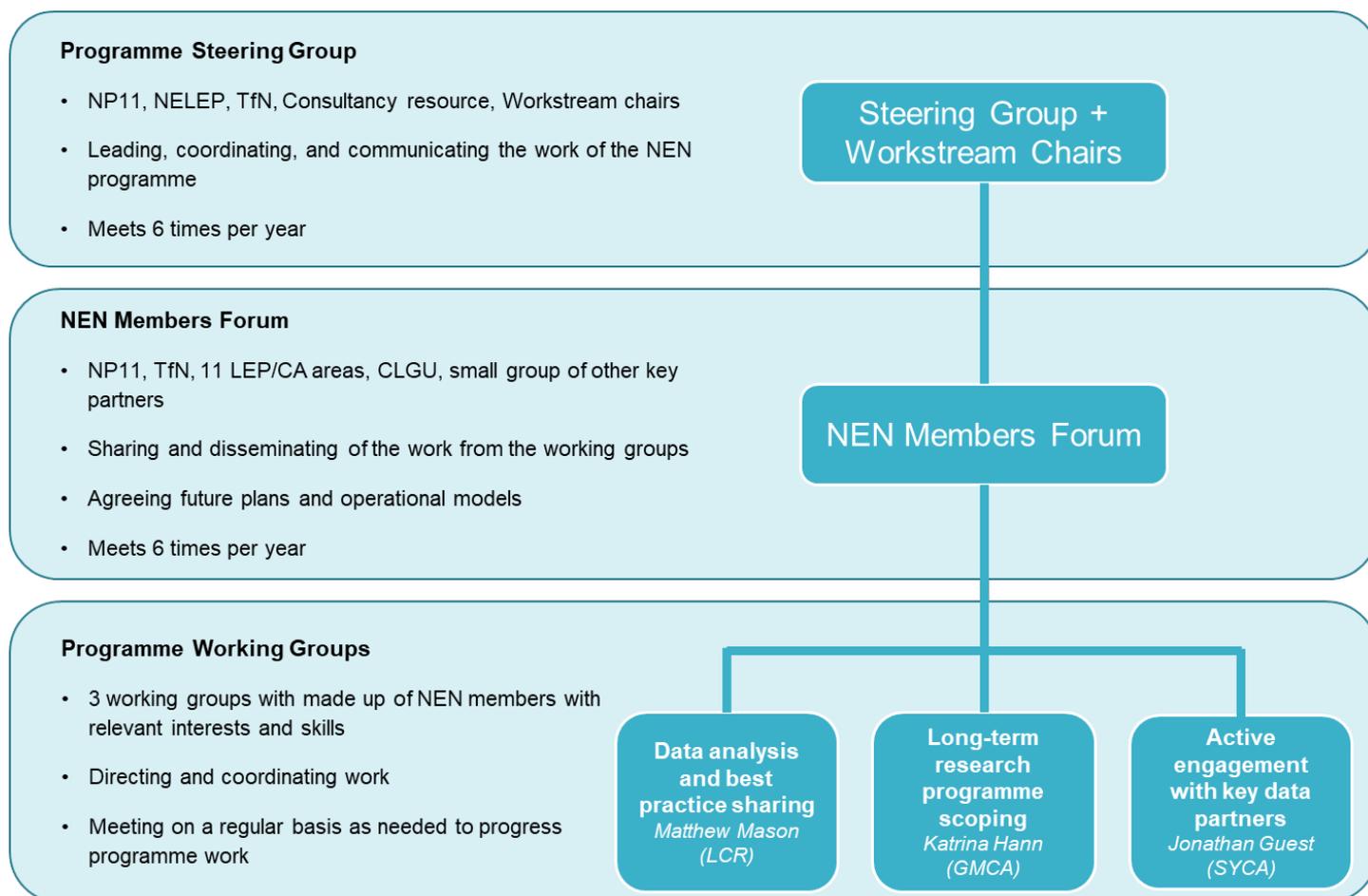
The following NEN members have agreed to contribute their time to act as a Chair for each of the three working groups and provide a directing and coordinating role for the agreed actions being taken forwards:

- Data analysis and best practice sharing: **Matthew Mason (Liverpool City Region CA)**
- Long-term research programme scoping: **Katrina Hann (Greater Manchester CA)**
- Active engagement with key data providers: **Jonathan Guest (South Yorkshire CA)**

Across the three working groups, the NEN Members Forum, which will include all 11 LEP/CA areas, TfN, CLGU plus a small group of other key partners, will meet 6 times a year, aligned to the timeline for NP11 Chief Executives. The Members Forum will provide the space for all members of the NEN to share and disseminate outputs, and agree future plans and operational models.

A small Steering Group will continue to ensure that the NEN programme is led and effectively co-ordinated and communicated. The Workstream Chairs and Steering Group will either be supported through NP11 core resources directly, through commissioned support from consultancy, or time bought out from a member LEP.

The governance structure for the NEN is illustrated in the diagram below:



Action Plans – June 2022

Alongside support for the NPIER update, the Northern Evidence Network (NEN) has identified three workstreams for activity over the next six months:

- **Workstream 1: Data analysis and best practice sharing** – how we can collectively improve our work on essential data analysis and better share best practice on data sources, tools and methods.
- **Workstream 2: Long-term research programme** – how we can tackle major research projects which significantly add to the stock of knowledge about the North’s economy whilst providing usable information for local policymaking as well.
- **Workstream 3: Partner engagement** – how we can work more closely with important data providers, government departments and other research partners.



This document sets out our proposed plans over the next six months. We believe that whilst there is capacity and interest across the network to lead on some elements of these, a minimum scale version of this plan will require support through the NP11 core budget. It **will require support, investment and engagement from Government to be able to progress all of this work as a package**, and this support will also add significant value in its own right through enablement of access to data providers and opportunity for engagement to central expertise.

Over and above these deliverables our plan would include the structures of co-ordination, communication and dissemination identified in the summary above.

A proposal will be developed for submission to Government and will include a request for:

- Financial support for a central coordination function to manage the agenda and key actions for the network, organise meetings, and contribute to the completion of specific tasks or actions

-
- A research and analysis budget to pursue research in the identified priority areas, particularly within the second of the three workstreams. This would be over and above the investment in developing the NPIER, rather than replacing it
 - Ongoing contributions of time and a commitment to engage with the NEN and support the dissemination of its research and analysis

Whilst we work with Government to identify resource to progress this, we will continue to develop our approach to sharing best practice and stronger engagement with partners.

Workstream 1: Data Analysis and Best Practice

This workstream will be led by Matthew Mason (Liverpool City CA) with support from broader members of the NEN and particularly from colleagues at North East LEP.

The aim of this workstream is to facilitate the sharing of data and analysis across the North, in order to improve the quality and level of access to key data sets that all partners can benefit from.

Through previous engagement with partners, it is apparent that places across the North are undertaking similar analysis on thematic areas which are common to all places. This includes analysing themes such as business demography, labour markets, earnings, migration, visitor economies, and productivity, as well as big-picture challenges of Levelling Up, Net Zero, and the Digital Sector. This analysis could be done more efficiently in partnership.

The intention from this working group is to complete this analysis more efficiently in partnership by establishing a working group to share intelligence on new data releases, best practice, and commercial data. This will help Northern authorities innovate and improve analysis regarding their local economies.

In addition to establishing this working group, there are a range of activities that will require active coordination support from NP11, and Government investment to enable members to contribute their expertise to these efforts.

The objectives of this workstream are set out below with details of the agreed actions.

Objective 1: 'Do it once' analysis

Discussion with partners has highlighted that there are a range of regular data 'products' being produced locally to support analysis and policy decisions. Many of these cover similar thematic areas, but include a mix of data and written analysis / interpretation. Members stressed the importance of adding value through local analysis, and that they were keen to retain the ability to 'interrogate' the underlying data. More work is therefore needed to understand where there would be genuine value added to partners from sharing data analysis work.

The main area of analysis where collaboration was considered to be particularly useful was in developing an approach to measuring and monitoring Levelling Up in the North. It was agreed that this work should initially be undertaken for three of the twelve missions, to pilot the approach of the Network with a higher level of granularity. This includes:

- establishing which metrics would be most appropriate to monitor the Government’s published missions. This work should draw in perspectives from other member LEPs and partners with expertise.
- identifying any particular areas of the emerging Government guidance which are problematic (i.e. where the measures proposed are not a good representative of the issue at hand within a Northern context)
- developing a Levelling Up dashboard or report for the North that can be used by all partners
- communicating NEN perspectives and expertise to Government (as part of Workstream 3)

Outputs to achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed set of metrics around Levelling Up that all members can use in conversations with Government • A pan-Northern Levelling Up dashboard or report to provide a shared evidence base for both regional and local analysis. This resource should provide a set of appropriate Levelling Up measures against three of the twelve missions for each member area and for the North as a whole.
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical expertise to develop a Levelling Up dashboard or report, drawing on range of member colleagues. There is an opportunity to have multiple analysts work on different missions to share the work. • Administrative support to arrange meetings and circulate notes.

Forward plan and timescales

- **July 2022:** Agree the membership of the analytical working group. NEN members to collate and share existing research on Levelling Up metrics that might inform the work.
- **August / September 2022:** Meeting / workshop to discuss what metrics and software might be used to measure Levelling Up, and to determine an appropriate timeline. Note produced on list of metrics for comment, and general approach to be agreed by members.
- **September 2022:** Meeting to agree responsibilities of members for developing different elements of the product.
- **October 2022:** Check-in meeting to review progress and troubleshoot issues.
- **November 2022:** Draft Levelling Up dashboard product completed.
- **December 2022:** Finalise Levelling Up dashboard product.

Objective 2: Sharing data and sharing expertise

Members indicated that they would highly value the creation of a space to network with other analysts, share insights on new data releases, discuss consistency of data sources, and have conversations regarding best practice or technical methodologies. It was agreed that a Microsoft Teams channel be established alongside more proactive forms of knowledge sharing and communication.

Outputs to achieve

- A Teams channel managed by members for sharing information on data and methodologies
 - A timeline of data and policy releases, with alerts to members
 - Monthly informal 'Lunch and Learn' sessions to share specific analytical methodologies and techniques
 - A feed of information from existing evidence networks such as TfN's Northern Evidence Hub or the ONS Subnational Statistics Roundup
 - A directory of data resources used by partners
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Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative support to establish and manage a Teams channel with workshop attendees invited • Commitment from all working group members to consider where there are existing evidence sources that can be fed into the Teams channel • Administrative support to alert members to new data and policy releases • Co-ordination support to set up the first 'Lunch and Learn' session
Forward plan and timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2022: Set up a Northern Evidence Network Teams channel • July 2022: Initial 'Lunch and Learn' session • Monthly: Ongoing 'Lunch and Learn' sessions with rotating presenters <p>Ongoing management of the Teams channel: much of the value of having a shared communication space will be if there is a curation and management of this space – proactively identifying information sources, reports, resources, etc. that are helpful and sharing these. This will be one of roles required of the co-ordination function of the NEN.</p>

Objective 3: Access to commercial data

It was agreed that sharing details of commercial data sets and conversations with suppliers would be helpful in order to identify possible benefits of this data (for those who have not yet purchased it), and opportunities for economies of scale or shared procurement.

Outputs to achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members to share experience of commonly used commercial data sets to better inform their procurement decisions.
Resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment from all working group members to share information regarding existing access to commercial data, and ongoing conversations with providers

Forward plan and
timescales

- **July / August 2022:** Meeting to discuss commercial datasets.
Agenda to include:

- Map of current data sets
- Pros and cons of different datasets
- Sharing existing pricing information
- Potential joint commissioning of commercial data

A note of this meeting including a more detailed programme of work on this action to be circulated to all members.

Workstream 2: Long term research programme scoping

This workstream will be led by Katrina Hann (Greater Manchester CA) with support from broader members of the NEN and particularly from colleagues at North East LEP and NP11.

This workstream will take a **phased approach**:

1. The **first phase** will involve scoping and building the specification for commissioning research and evidence across the suggested themes below. A forward plan for this phase of work is detailed below.
2. Upon receipt of additional investment, these specifications will then be taken forward as part of a **second phase** to deliver research and analysis that supports decision making across the North.

The following **principles** have been agreed to shape the work in this workstream:

- **The research should address genuinely pan-northern issues** that individual LEPs might not otherwise be able to effectively explore on their own. Where there are different thematic implications for individual LEPs, these should be drawn out.
- **The workstream should not duplicate existing initiatives.** It should identify and fill existing gaps, help to scale and join up existing research and provide analytical support for key Northern scale policy programme. Given that the policy and research landscape is complex, it will important to take stock on a regular basis and ensure that research activity is still delivering useful findings.
- The research produced as a result of this workstream should **provide insight and learning for LEPs with information relevant to their areas.** It should be up to individual organisations to determine their own recommendations / conclusions from this.

Through discussion with members, and work with the NEN Steering Group, we suggest three research programmes to be scoped:

- **Competitiveness:** Research that explores the fundamental drivers of productivity in the North's economy – including research into: innovation, application of new technologies, and trade. This will build on the work of the NPIER which has established four prime capabilities which the North possesses which are internationally competitive.
- **Levelling Up:** Research that explores the interaction between economies of different types of place, as well as underlying issues of inclusivity that have a bearing on economic outcomes. This will align with the NPIER's focus on inclusion.

- **Sustainability:** Research that helps understand the ‘green’ economy and the drivers of improving sustainability across the economy as a whole. This will build on the Northern Powerhouse Clean Growth Proposition and align with wider pan-Northern perspectives on clean growth and net zero.

In all cases, ultimate research work needs to provide **evidence on the issues and challenges**, whilst also providing **evidence on best practice in designing interventions**.

The research programme agreed within this workstream is intended to complement but not replace ongoing work across the NPIER, and wider strands of research from LEPs and Combined Authorities.

We recognise that these themes reflect substantial pieces of research, and that substantive progress cannot be achieved without investment of adequate resources. Therefore, commissioning the research scoped as part of the first phase of work detailed below is contingent upon receipt of additional investment, most likely from Government, potentially also drawing in investments from member organisations or other partners.

In the first phase, projects will be scoped to develop more detailed specifications for the work that would be taken forward should resources allow. This work will have the aim of delivering a detailed specification for each research theme by January 2023. A forward plan for this is as follows:

Forward plan and timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2022: Establish the long-term research working group. • July - September 2022: Members to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provide input on relevant projects they are leading on / aware of regarding the three suggested research themes (both research and delivery of support). ○ indicate the gaps in their evidence and key delivery challenges, the limitations of the work, scoping where new research might go further, and identifying experts or other organisations to consult. ○ join the Levelling Up metrics workshop (workstream 1) and identify gaps where the metrics to address particular Levelling Up missions are incomplete. • October - November 2022: Working group to consult with members, relevant external academics, and other organisations (including business groups) to develop an approach to addressing identified gaps. Approaches might include: use of the ONS Secure Research Service, working with academic partners, etc. • November 2022: Working group to feedback findings of work-to-date to NEN. Working group to produce prioritised
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programme of specific long-term research and identify potential costs of research if relevant.

- **January 2023:** NEN to review research proposals and (upon receipt of additional funding) initiate long-term research efforts as part of second phase

We recognise that there may need to be additional prioritisation and a focus on a smaller number of themes to ensure effective use of capacity.

A further description and explanation of the three research themes to be scoped are as follows:

Research theme 1: Competitiveness

This theme covers research which supports the improvement of productivity and international competitiveness across the North. In practice, this is expected to include topics like:

- Productivity – how it is changing, drivers of productivity, and the role of key technologies (especially digital technologies) in driving change
- Innovation – levels of investment in innovation, understanding the links between policy and innovation outcomes
- Trade – the link between the above topics and exporting activity, and understanding how trading activity is changing in response to Brexit and global trends

The Network will need to work together to further clarify the priority questions that will inform the Northern approach to digital transformation interventions and policy.

Productivity and technology

Members agreed that research was needed to understand more about productivity – in part to have a definitive statement about the North’s contribution to the national economy. Members also agreed that the role of digital transformation on specific sectors and the economy as a whole is a major economic trend that could be better understood.

Innovation

Members have identified the need to develop an innovation ‘playbook’, which brings together intelligence on what really works and what places across the North can and should do to support innovative economies and will inform and support the action planning for the Innovation programme. Specific areas of research needed to inform interventions include:

- The innovation ‘maturity’ of businesses
- Understanding local R&D strengths and specialisms
- Open innovation challenges

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- Supporting the diffusion of innovation and technology
 - Providing innovation spaces and support

Trade

Given the important changes in the global economy, and the UK's position in global trade networks due to the decision to leave the EU, it is important to understand how businesses across the North are adapting and how exporting is being effective. Exports and trading are also an area where data has been limited in the past and which would therefore benefit from additional analysis.

Research theme 2: Levelling Up

Members discussed the need for better research on:

- the long-term drivers of growth in places, and the economic interactions between places
- 'inclusivity' and how a range of different social challenges interacts with long-term economic development

A better understanding of these issues could support a pan-Northern approach to the Levelling Up agenda.

Long-term research under this theme will closely relate to the work being undertaken in Workstream 1 (identifying appropriate metrics) and Workstream 3 (working with government departments and other research partners). The outputs from Workstream 1 should help inform where there are gaps in the evidence base that need to be addressed through specific research.

Given the nature of the topic, it is recognised that there is scope to work collaboratively with other external partners including the Productivity Commission, Inclusive Growth Network, IPPR North, NHSA, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and Resolution Foundation.

Research theme 3: Sustainability and decarbonisation

Members have noted that there are a number of existing research projects focussed on:

- The size and scale of the low carbon environmental goods sector – including defining 'Green' jobs
- The benefits of decarbonisation for specific sectors (e.g. GMCA work on decarbonisation for manufacturers through the Made Smarter programme)
- The key interventions that support broader decarbonisation across the North (e.g. TfN's work around decarbonisation in transport, the skills requirements and supply for domestic retrofitting)

In terms of **understanding the size of the low carbon environmental goods sector (LCEGS)**, ongoing work with partners such as kMatrix and Data City in multiple LEPs are

addressing some of these issues. However, members recognise that there are still a number of gaps which the Northern Evidence Network could potentially address. This may involve engaging researchers in the North with relevant expertise, for example at the Universities of Lancaster or Newcastle, and may also benefit from drawing on learning from organisations elsewhere in the country such as Midlands Connect who are tackling similar problems.

In terms of work on **decarbonisation**, it is recognised that there are findings that will be relevant to the North as a whole. There is therefore a benefit to drawing together the collective findings of this work.

Each of these elements requires a further work to bring partners of the Network together to draw together existing findings, and scope how and where there are gaps or known unknowns that the research can go further in answering.

Workstream 3: Partner engagement

This workstream will be led by Jonathan Guest (South Yorkshire CA) with support from broader members of the NEN and particularly from colleagues at NP11.

At present, members of the Northern Evidence Network are primarily engaging separately with data providers, Government departments, and agencies. The Northern Evidence Network intends to join up these conversations and to do this on a pan-Northern basis. Going to these partners with one 'northern voice', will result in more effective communication and better outcomes for all members both regionally and locally.

Forming an NEN Research and Engagement working group will help to drive these conversations forward. This group will meet on a regular basis to identify which partners to speak to, and identify which member is best placed to lead the conversation with different partners. The group will also ensure that key points from conversations are communicated to the rest of the NEN. To help with this, the group will maintain a simple CRM-type system to manage contacts and discussions.

In order for the NEN Research and Engagement working group to be able to take the agreed actions forwards and enable partners to contribute their expertise, time and resources from member organisations and from Government will likely be needed to support these efforts.

During the discussion it was agreed that there are three groups of partners to prioritise engagement with:

1. The **ONS** is a key agency to engage with as the main source of local economic data.
2. **Government departments** such as BEIS, DLUHC (and CLGU), DfT, DfE, Defra, HMRC, and DCMS are important in their role as data providers and on a strategic policy basis.
3. **Think tanks, academics, and research institutes** such as IPPR North, JRF, Centre for Cities, Centre for Progressive Policy, What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth, as well as universities across the North. These partners are of interest as potential research collaborators and sources of information, particularly for the work commencing as part of Workstream 2.

The purpose of engaging with these groupings is set out below:

ONS

- To achieve better access to data
- To communicate our priorities / data challenges to the ONS
- To partner on challenging research
- To understand and influence future pipeline of data work

Government departments

- To achieve better access to data (e.g. HMRC regarding firm level data on exporters and importers, DWP regarding Universal Credit data)
- To communicate our priorities / data challenges to relevant Government departments (e.g. challenges around DWPs Stat-Xplore interface)
- To understand and influence the future pipeline of data and evidence work

Think tanks, academics, and research institutes

- To identify shared research projects and useful evidence resources
- To draw on the strengths of the North's research institutions to benefit the region

Other groups that were discussed include place-based groupings, such as Core Cities, and other regional bodies such as the Midlands Engine Observatory where there might be an exchange of understanding and best practice, and ongoing work on advocacy for access to local economic data. It was recognised that there are a large number of potential conversations that the NEN might seek to pursue, and in practice this effort will need to be prioritised.

From these groupings, the following initial objectives were discussed and agreed.

Objective 1: Engagement with the ONS

The purpose of engaging with the ONS is to:

- Achieve better access to data
- Communicate our priorities / data challenges to the ONS
- Partnership on challenging research
- Understand and influence future pipeline of data work

There is existing engagement with the ONS through individual LEPs, the City Regions Analysis group and also through thematic groups across the North. While these groups might be a natural place to engage with the ONS, they don't include some NEN members

who have separate relationships with the ONS. We also understand that ONS is seeking to broaden its engagement to other partners beyond the MCAs.

Through the discussion the group agreed that it would be most helpful to engage with the ONS at the level of the NEN itself, and on a small number of specific, thematic issues. The ONS labour market group, and productivity work being undertaken between ONS and GMCA as part of the GM Strategy, were given as examples of where there has been good engagement and the conversations have been useful in drawing in relevant Government departments.

One specific issue that was raised in discussion was to gain better access to the ONS Secure Research Service, which is a useful resource, but where access requires a research brief which may be hard to design without access to data in the first place. Members were keen to engage with ONS in order to access the data in a ‘sandbox’ environment, which would allow analysts to explore the data initially before progressing a full research brief.

Who will be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement lead to be identified
Forward plan and timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2022: Initial meeting of engagement working group to agree a small handful of prioritised areas where the NEN might want to engage with ONS – e.g. labour market, productivity, innovation, trade etc. Identify and map where there are existing relationships and identify who is best suited to lead the engagement. Establish a process for NEN colleagues to communicate issues to the engagement working group, and for the engagement working group to report back to NEN. August / September 2022: Approach ONS to engage around specific identified themes. Ongoing: Engagement working group to collect feedback from members on relevant data issues and engage with ONS on these. Engagement working group to report back to NEN on a monthly basis. Engagement working group to also identify elements of Workstream 2 that could be developed further with an active research partnership with the ONS.

Objective 2: Engagement with other Government departments and agencies

Aside from the ONS, Government departments are also important producers of key data sets. However, these can be hard to locate and get access to, as the details of these datasets aren't always clearly communicated.

Government colleagues have noted the important structural changes happening centrally – including the new Spatial Data Unit, cross-Government Levelling Up groups, and regional Levelling Up directors. There is positive encouragement from Government that engagement from the NEN would be welcomed. This is something that should be pursued in due course with colleagues from DLUHC as the work progresses.

Alongside this it would be sensible to identify some more direct conversations that NEN would like to have with other Government departments and agencies. In the discussion with members, the following examples were noted:

- It would be helpful to speak with DfE regarding the LEO dataset. Colleagues have approached DfE previously about accessing this data but found it challenging to maintain the contact due to personnel churn.
- HMRC - regarding firm level data on exporters and importers
- DWP - regarding Universal Credit data and the Stat-Xplore interface
- UKRI/Innovate UK - regarding locational information and improving access to their data
- Ofcom - regarding their Connected Nations dataset.

In general therefore, the purpose of these discussions should be to:

- Achieve better access to data
- Communicate our priorities / data challenges to relevant Government departments
- Understand and influence the future pipeline of data and evidence work

In some instances, it was noted that as part of a close working relationship, CLGU may be able to advise on points of contact for other Government departments.

Who will be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement lead to be identified
Forward plan and timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2022: All members to feed into a CRM-type system that highlights Government department being engaged, specific named contacts, and the issue(s) being discussed. • August / September 2022: Hold meeting of engagement working group to agree which colleagues will pursue contacts with different Government departments on behalf of the network, and priority areas for discussion. • Ongoing: Subject to confirmation of future resource position, establish and maintain ongoing discussions with identified contacts in key organisations. Regular reporting back to NEN to communicate outcomes of discussions and to understand local issues that need to be communicated to Government.

Objective 3: Engagement with other academic partners and think tanks

Ongoing work with research partners across the North currently includes work with the N8 Research Partnership, Northern Evidence Academic Forum, Productivity Institute, Policy at Manchester (who have an appetite to carry out research at a Northern level), Resolution Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and the What Works Centre for Local Economic Growth. The aim of this and other engagement is to identify shared research projects and useful evidence resources.

As with the above Objective 2, it will first be important to establish who the key contacts are in each of these organisations and build on these to address research questions that emerge as part of Workstream 2.

Who will be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement lead to be identified
Forward plan and timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2022: All members to feed into a CRM-type system that highlights Government department being engaged, specific named contacts, and the issue(s) being discussed. August / September 2022: Hold meeting of engagement working group to agree which colleagues will pursue contacts with different external partners on behalf of the network, and priority areas for discussion. Ongoing: Subject to confirmation of future resource position of the network, establish and maintain ongoing discussions with identified contacts in key organisations. Regular reporting back to NEN to communicate outcomes of discussions and to understand potential collaborative opportunities.