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Assembly Members

19 March 2013

Dear Assembly Members

The Dee Region Cross-Border Economy – Report by Dr Elizabeth Haywood

In October 2012, I announced that Dr Elizabeth Haywood, Chair of the City Regions Task and Finish Group, would be commissioned to look at cross-border economic development in North East Wales following the recommendation in the report to strengthen the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA).

Dr Haywood has now issued me with her report. It reaffirms the belief of the City Regions Task and Finish Group that a City Region cannot be recognised in this area based on evidence. However, it does contain four key recommendations:

To become a real strategic force in the region, the MDA will need to be given relevant powers and funding. It will also need to change its structure, to incorporate strong private and education (HE/FE) sector membership.

The MDA should have the authority to develop a cross-border labour market plan, and to develop and deliver a regional skills agenda.

The MDA should take the lead in promoting the region for investment purposes, making a virtue of its cross-border nature and rejecting the

existing tendency to focus marketing on one side of the border or the other.

There should be a Memorandum of Understanding between the Welsh and UK Governments covering cross-border transport planning (binding on independent bodies such as Network Rail), with the MDA, or Taith and the Cheshire LTP, having a statutory role to be heard on proposals of regional significance.

I intend to formally publish the report shortly and open a brief consultation period to seek views on Dr Haywood's findings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dr Haywood', written in a cursive style.