



Automotive industry expert Professor David Bailey

May 15, 2023 08:34 BST

## Northumbria hosts Place Leadership in Europe seminar

**Northumbria University academics are partnering with UK and international colleagues from across Europe in the first of a series of seminars to debate Place Leadership in Europe.**

Hosted with the University of Birmingham and the Regional Studies Association, a global community for regional and urban research, development and policy, the seminar is being held at Northumbria's Newcastle Business School between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May. It will focus first

on the North East economy, centering on the future of the automotive industries and the switch to electric vehicles as well as the importance of new battery plants.

Automotive industry academic expert, Professor David Bailey from the University of Birmingham, addressed the meeting on the future of the European and international car industry and looked at the linkages between the North East and the West Midlands and the need for a better economic strategy for the sector in United Kingdom. Professor Bailey was joined by Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor of Northumbria University, who looked at the regional role of Northumbria up to 2030 and its strategic importance and alliances with the other five Universities in the North East. Both Keynote speakers examined the importance of university research and the need to focus on advanced manufacturing and public sector priorities for the North East up to 2030 and beyond.

The seminar comes at a time when the consultation period has finished for the North East Devolution Deal and a Parliamentary Bill will now pave the way for the enlarged, new North East Combined Authority with seven local authorities across Tyneside, Durham and Northumberland from May 2024 after the election of the new Mayor. The North East Mayoral Combined Authority will be the latest of the new Combined authorities to be established in England and the conference will look at lessons learned elsewhere in England, and internationally. The leaders of the seven North East local authorities were invited and speakers in a stimulating debate included the leaders of Durham County Council, Cllr Amanda Hopgood, and Northumberland County Council, Cllr Glen Sanderson, as well as representatives from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP)- including its Chair Lucy Winskell OBE, representing the private sector.

The conference will hear from the West Midlands and from West and South Yorkshire as well as drawing out the lessons for joint work with Scotland on a transborder initiative with the North East and Cumbria.

Delegates also heard from the Chief Executive of the Regional Studies Association, Mrs Sally Hardy about the academic association's networks and ambitious plans across Europe and internationally. On the Friday a session will look at the role of universities and local authorities in shaping and enhancing policy capacity and the research needs of the city-region. It will highlight the work of Insights North East - a project led by Newcastle

University and delivered via a core partnership with the NHS, North of Tyne Combined Authority, Newcastle City Council and Northumbria University - as delegates will hear of plans for Health, Net Zero and Inclusive Growth over the next three years.

Academic papers presented at the conference were included in a special edition of Regional Studies on Place Leadership in Europe and beyond, and on the Friday, delegates will hear of place leadership and developments elsewhere including Prague, the Czech Republic, Tampere, Finland, Angers, France, Northern Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, Australia and New Zealand. A paper from Professor Robin Hambleton, Emeritus Professor of City Leadership at the University of the West of England, Bristol, will draw out the international lessons for city leaders in policy- making.

Professors Joyce Liddle, John Shutt and Ignazio Cabras from Northumbria's Newcastle Business School chaired the conference and stressed the need for the North East to take a fresh look at the regional economy and its key priorities, new governance arrangements and how to develop research and policy capacity. By looking closer at the experience of other Combined authorities across England, together with international and European comparisons, the conference organisers anticipate greater lesson learning between the different jurisdictions.

Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: "Place leadership is vital for transformational change in policy making to improve the quality of life for people and communities. At Northumbria we have experienced our own extraordinary transition in recent years as a research-intensive university focused on unlocking potential and changing lives. We are delighted to host this conference and to welcome so many experts to help shape and lead the debate."

Professor Liddle added "Place leadership really matters, and we need to do more to bring different stakeholders together across the region- new initiatives will be needed to increase collaboration with the new Combined Authority in the period ahead. Established agencies like NELEP and Nexus will be integrated into the new governance arrangements, and there is much work to do to strengthen the regional economy in the period ahead. Universities have a vital role to play in this."

Professor Shutt welcomed the speakers and the need to increase multi- actor

collaboration. The conference will be looking at the UK as a whole and recent developments on the economy, on environment and social policy and arguing for stronger, more integrated perspectives to be taken, learning from other city- regions throughout Europe and closer University- local authority joint alliances.

Professor David Bailey commented “The auto industry will see more change in the next ten years than in the previous hundred years. This will transform the supply chain. Automotive regions will need to reposition themselves in a world of autonomous, connected and electric cars as part of meeting the challenges of Net Zero and Industry 4.0. Joining up new technologies with sectors and places is going to need a regional industry policy and place leadership - key themes of this conference.”

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