



House of Commons

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## **Northumbria researchers advise MPs on how Brexit could impact the North East**

**Northumbria academics have led a roundtable discussion at the House of Commons on the potential impact of Brexit and the future of the Northern Powerhouse.**

The event, entitled 'Beyond the fragmented state: Mobilising the Northern Powerhouse for stronger public governance and service delivery', addressed and discussed multiple aspects associated with the development of the Northern Powerhouse and the uncertainty created by the Brexit process. It

was led by Professors Joyce Liddle, John Shutt and Ignazio Cabras from Newcastle Business School, and chaired by the RT Hon Kevan Jones, MP for Durham North.

Significant focus was also devoted to the role played by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in achieving economic and development targets set at both national and local levels. During the session the three Professors gave an overview of the new, complex governance arrangements across England, answering questions from a number of MPs from Northern constituencies, alongside questions from policy and economic advisers based at Westminster.

Professor Liddle said: 'The devolutionary process linked with the Northern Powerhouse has created greater uncertainty, fragmentation, lack of co-ordination between the various agencies, and blurred the lines of accountability for decision-making. Based on our research we would argue that there has been insufficient thinking on how state and non-state organisations will work together to improve the North's future. Beyond the difficulties of the next two years we need to develop a new 2030 agenda to deal with UK local government changes.'

The academics believe that in this context, the uncertainty created by the Brexit process adds further complexity for regions, local authorities and other state, non-state, business and civic agencies.

"The North East of England and its economy are significantly exposed to any outcome derived from Brexit," said Professor Cabras. "For instance, in case of a 'no deal' exit from EU, our region presents the highest risks in terms of declining GDP and increasing unemployment among all the English regions. Given the current scenario, any decision on future industrial strategy and investments for the region needs to be pondered even more carefully than ever before," he added,

Professor Shutt advised that 'many questions remain on Northern governance and how public services will be delivered in future. "We need to explore and find optimal solutions in order to reduce fragmentation across governing bodies, improving public service delivery and enhancing multi-agency governance in the UK," he said.

The HoC Roundtable is the first of a series of initiatives, led by Northumbria researchers, aimed at stimulating a multi-level discussion on potential and

future strategies for the North of England, and at addressing and debating the key priorities for governance and public service delivery in view of finding suitable solutions.

A limited number of places at Northumbria University will be available to high-achieving students through Clearing this year. For more information, visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/clearing](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/clearing) or call the Clearing Hotline on 0800 085 1085.

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