

Greater Portland Leadership Best Practices Trip to England & Scotland October 1-10, 2019

Comments by Ian Eisenbach

UK Best Practices Trip Takeaways

- 1) **Our city, region, and state need to be more thoughtful, deliberate, and coordinated in their taxation schemes.** The City of Portland, Metro, and the State of Oregon have each come up with creative ways to raise revenue for a host of projects and departments, but this creativity has also created inefficiencies between jurisdictions and fostered resentment among citizens. If we want to implement and fund ambitious housing, healthcare, transportation, or low-carbon transition programs, our governments must present taxpayers with clear A to B proposals and transparent tax schemes.
- 2) **We need a stronger mayor.** London, Manchester, and Liverpool all have mayors with the executive authority to implement and enforce ambitious programs. With a Portland-style commissioner form of government, London's citywide congestion pricing scheme and Liverpool's inclusive growth plan would likely be hindered by rebellious boroughs and inner-City Hall political tensions. The upcoming reevaluation of the City of Portland's form of government will be an important first step to creating a government that can effectively carry out ambitious agendas.
- 3) **We need to continue seeking solutions to simultaneously address affordable housing and sustainable transportation.** Low- and middle-income workers have been completely priced out of the London housing market and forced to commute into Central London from the exurbs or beyond. Such employment-housing distortions burden transportation infrastructure and increase emissions. Studies show that Portland is on the same track, and our public transit infrastructure isn't even comparable with London's. In order to protect our workers, our infrastructure, and our environment, we need to continue prioritizing policies that increasing housing volume around transportation hubs and lines. We also need to continue increasing the bandwidth and reliability of our public transit services to further complement affordable housing schemes.
- 4) **Our innovation efforts need to be more visible and more connective.** Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool, and presumably London have each leveraged their rich diversity of thought in the creation of their innovation hubs. They've connected the public sector, large corporations, SMEs, universities, and, to a lesser yet equally important degree, minority communities to create comprehensive, community-based problem solving forums. In our region, we have world-class minds and enviable access to capital, but we don't yet have a

comprehensive platform to connect the dots. We too can become a global leader in innovation, but we need to better engage and unite our regional stakeholders.

- 5) **Portland needs to continue “looking outward”**. Our people, products, and culture are some of the most special in the entire world. The world loves our footwear, our beer, and our semiconductors, and I believe that we have so much more to offer. Our city, region, and state should prioritize strengthening our ties to the global economy at all costs, just as the Liverpool and Manchester are doing. We too have what it takes to become a top destination for foreign investment and tourism alike. The more value we add abroad, the more prosperity and pride we'll enjoy at home.