

SCR - HOUSING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2019 AT 1.00 PM

11 BROAD STREET WEST, SHEFFIELD S1 2BQ



Present:

Councillor Chris Read (Chair)
Tanwer Khan (Co-Chair)
Neil MacDonald
Councillor Glyn Jones
Damian Allen
Mark Lynam

Rotherham MBC
Private Sector LEP Board Member
Private Sector LEP Board Member
Doncaster MBC
Doncaster MBC
SCR Executive Team

Officers in Attendance:

Colin Blackburn
Jonathan Guest
Becky Guthrie

SCR Executive Team
Sheffield City Region
Sheffield City Region

Guests in Attendance

Apologies:

Councillor Julie Dore
Councillor Tim Cheetham

Sheffield City Council
Barnsley MBC

1 Welcome and Apologies

Members' apologies were noted as above.

2 Declarations of Interest by individual Members in relation to any item of business on the agenda

None.

3 Urgent items / Announcements

None.

4 Public Questions of Key Decisions

None received.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th July are agreed to be an accurate record.

6 Strategic Economic Plan and Local Industrial Strategy Review

A paper and accompanying presentation were received to provide an overview of the current economic landscape in Sheffield City Region and the emerging evidence to structure future priorities/activities in the SCR in relation to housing, to be encapsulated within the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)

Information was received to explain the process and timescales for development. It was noted the SEP and LIS are scheduled for publication in December 2019 but acknowledged there are a number of factors that may affect this intention.

Regarding sign-off it was noted the SCR effectively owns the SEP and can sign this off when considered appropriate. However, the LIS is co-owned with government and subject to other procedures and expectations (to be agreed with government).

Comparisons were drawn between the SCR and other city regions (nationally and internationally), noting the SCR lags behind almost every other region in terms of GVA and productivity.

It was acknowledged the drivers of productivity are numerous and suggested the SCR might be affected by some of these disproportionately, including having a significant number of jobs in low productivity sectors, lower skills levels and relatively less investment in research and development.

Further information and evidence was presented with specific relevance to housing growth related matters including demographics, the availability of affordable housing and housing energy efficiency

Members were presented with the proposed ‘people-focussed’ vision for the SCR’s SEP and LIS and its proposed supporting policies and outcomes (noting the metrics for these outcomes have yet to be determined).

However, noting the suggested vision that *“In the SCR, every person will have an opportunity to take part in one of the most prosperous, dynamic and resilient global economies”*, members challenged whether this is realistic given the SCR’s historic prosperity trends (noting this sentiment had been raised at other thematic Board meetings).

Members discussed the importance of systemically understanding the dynamics of the SCR to inform debates around how we manage and realistically maximise the achievability of the SCR residents’ aspirations.

It was suggested our approach to looking at ‘place’ needs to be more sophisticated to ensure we aren’t doing more of the same and expecting different results, and ensure we are capable of building on what works within the reality of what we are resourced to do

The Board considered the importance of growth being 'inclusive' to ensure this genuinely translates into improving the lives of the SCR's residents and breaks the cycle of the SCR being stuck in a low wage economy.

It was suggested there appears to still be a significant amount of work to refine the SEP before it is due to be presented to the MCA and LEP and suggested that officers developing the draft Strategy need to start to frame this around the interventions and policy areas (such as liveability or inclusivity) that efforts should be targeted on (with metrics to be determined going forward) to ensure the Strategy isn't too vague or overreaching.

RESOLVED - that the Board notes the summarised evidence base and the emerging areas for prioritisation.

7 Modern Methods of Construction

A report was received to introduce the topic of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) to the Board for discussion and to invite steer on the region's potential future activity in this area.

It was noted the government and Homes England are strongly promoting and encouraging MMC as a key way to accelerate housing delivery and produce better-quality homes, as well to address the emerging construction skills shortage across the country. However, it was noted there has only been a few MMC schemes introduced to date in the SCR due to a range of issues, but primarily due to unit costs per home still being higher than existing traditional build.

A presentation was received to further explain the concept of MMC and explore the SCR's potential involvement going forward.

It was noted a number of events had been held recently for MMC stakeholders to consider the local MMC market and provided an opportunity to share organisations' progress and local ambitions for the adoption of MMC.

The Board gave consideration to a number of MMC matters raised in the report and presentation.

In taking our thinking forward, Members agreed the need to consider the following: would a drive on MMC affect SCR and what are the benefits/ dis-benefits, how could SCR drive MMC demand, and how would SCR MMC sector collaboration work?

It was suggested it may be beneficial to work with neighbouring LEP areas with similar MMC aspirations to allow matters of mutual interest to be considered, including the merits of standardised specification and whether critical mass targets for new housing could be better met jointly.

The Board considered the role that the local authorities (and other land owners) need to take if MMC is to succeed locally.

The Board agreed the proposed timetable for further development work on the

initiative and requested another workshop be held mid-November to consider the pre-publication version of the business case report and work up the concept of a model local authority policy for MMC (to be developed with Heads of Housing building on the Statement of Common Ground).

Action: Becky to make arrangements for this event.

RESOLVED – that the Board notes the issues relating to existing MMC activity in the SCR and agrees to promote MMC for housing within the City Region to meet strategic objectives.

8 **Housing Evidence Base**

A report was received to update the Board on work to undertake a housing review (as per the action approved at the previous meeting).

Further support for the proposed focus for this work and the intended next steps was sought.

It was noted that based on the matters considered at the previous meeting, officers have begun to prepare a brief for commissioning support from an external organisation that can offer a fresh perspective and new insights. It was noted it is envisaged the work commissioned will focus on two main elements; housing needs and housing markets.

It was noted that rather than commissioning this work through the usual procurement routes, the nature of the work provides an opportunity to form a more meaningful partnership with experts in the housing field and build a longer lasting relationship and help to build capacity and knowledge within SCR whilst also developing some fresh ideas and perspectives.

This approach was endorsed by the Board.

It was also noted conversations have been held with senior representatives at Homes England to strengthen relationships with SCR and engage their expertise more directly to support this work.

RESOLVED, that the Board:

1. Notes the focus of the work to date and the types of questions and issues that could be explored as part of the housing review.
2. Notes the contribution that Homes England and other stakeholders could play as these issues are investigated.

Note the intended timeframe and approach for taking this work forward.

9 **Forward Plan 2019/20**

Presented for information.

Suggestions for additional items were invited.

10 **Any Other Business**

None.

In accordance with Combined Authority's Constitution/Terms of Reference for the Board, Board decisions need to be ratified by the Head of Paid Services (or their nominee) in consultation with the Chair of the Board. Accordingly, the undersigned has consulted with the Chair and hereby ratifies the decisions set out in the above minutes.

Signed _____
Name _____
Position _____
Date _____