

The University of Sheffield
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South Yorkshire
Mayoral Combined Authority
11 Broad Street West
Sheffield, S1 2BQ

25 November 2021

RE: The South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre

Dear Vice Chancellor,

We write on behalf of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to give support to your application to the Research England Development Fund to create a South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre.

The SYMCA and the University of Sheffield have been building collaboration around net-zero and sustainability for a number of years and have developed a close and productive working relationship in this area. Last year, in collaboration with the University, we developed the MCA's net zero work programme, which details a range of actions required to achieve net-zero emissions in the South Yorkshire region by 2040.

We are now building on this progress through the co-development, with the University, of the South Yorkshire Sustainability Centre. The centre will fill a regional gap in the provision of a high-quality, evidence base and the monitoring and evaluation framework required to better inform decisions and track interventions around net zero and sustainability. It also will serve to integrate research, regional policy and project development and delivery by forging new collaborations between a range of diverse stakeholders within the region. We see the centre as acting as the 'research arm' of the region, to support delivery of the actions in the net zero programme and wider vision of a sustainable South Yorkshire.

More widely, the centre is part of our plans for South Yorkshire to become a greener and fairer region, to meet the aims of our strategic economic plan and our energy strategy. We are planning, in 2022, to publish a new sustainability strategy, for which we will need the kind of evidence base and strategic research the centre can provide.

It is imperative that the South Yorkshire region is not left behind as the UK's economy transforms as a result of national legislation mandating net zero emissions by 2050. The sustainability centre will be crucial in mitigating this risk. However, we also see the centre as a catalyst that will consolidate the range of unique, world leading, assets within South Yorkshire, thereby supporting the region to lead nationally and internationally on achieving net-zero emissions in a fair and equitable way.

In recognition of the strategic importance of this collaboration, we are proposing the following contributions to the sustainability centre, as a principle collaborator we have already committed:

- A contribution of £37,871 from the Mayoral Capacity Fund towards the initial project work programme.
- In kind support of 48 hours of officer time to co-development of the proposed projects and centre structure, worth £1,997

We then propose for the initial 4 year life of the centre;

- The SYMCA's Net Zero Project Director will sit on the SYSC's management board, providing guidance on the regional direction and ensuring the centre meets its goal of being embedded in the region's strategic goals. We anticipate this being an in-kind contribution of 48 hours per year. Valued at £1,997 per year.
- Approximately 120 hours a year of time in kind of staff to attend regional fora convened by the centre, expected to be split across out Transport, Housing, Infrastructure, Business & Skills and Policy Teams. Valued at £3,650 per year.
- To assist with the ongoing development and delivery of projects we will provide a capital fund of £150,000 per year against which research projects can apply to be funded. We envisage this fund will be administered by the centre's own management board using an agreed set of governance principles which will be determined during the mobilisation phase of the centre project.

The above will be contingent on approval through the SYMCA's own business planning and governance process to ensure funds and resources are made available for the start of the 2022 financial year.

The total value of these contributions during the development and first four years of the centre equate to £662,459 and we hope indicates our commitment to the project, but also the value we place in the outputs, networks and knowledge base it will create.

We look forward, through the centre, to building upon the productive working relationship with the University as critical means to achieving the SYMCA's and region's net zero and sustainability targets.

Yours sincerely,

Signature Redacted

Dan Jarvis MBE MP
Mayor of the South Yorkshire Mayoral
Combined Authority

Signature Redacted

Dave Smith
Chief Executive South Yorkshire
Mayoral Combined Authority