

Mayoral Combined Authority Board

06 March 2023

Mayor's First Year in Office

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
<i>Reason why exempt:</i>	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Discussion
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary

This report sets out a summary of the work of the Mayoral Combined Authority since the Mayor was elected to office in May 2022. It provides an opportunity to reflect on challenges and successes as the Board develops its work plan for the coming year.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The Mayor was elected on an ambitious manifesto to fix public transport; create more, better jobs; build a cleaner, greener South Yorkshire; make South Yorkshire the healthiest region in the country; and to do politics differently. This complements the work of South Yorkshire's four Local Authorities. The report also reflects on the challenges that have affected people, places and businesses across the region over the past year.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to support the content of this report.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

N/A

1. Background

1.1 Economic uncertainty

The year since May 2022 has been difficult for our communities. The country avoided recession in the second half of 2022 but double-digit inflation – driven by a surge in household energy costs - has led to significant cost of living challenges across the region. South Yorkshire entered this period in a fragile economic position, with fuel poverty and other indices of deprivation already at above-average levels.

These economic challenges became very real over the last year. Most notably, last summer we were notified by Peel Group of their intention to hold a strategic review into the future of Doncaster Sheffield Airport. Its subsequent closure led to many direct and indirect job losses. We have faced similar challenges across South Yorkshire; in our logistics and steel sectors, across our high streets and city centres and in the public services we rely on, including an operator-driven 15% cut to our bus network in October.

1.2 MCA Review and leadership change

Since his election, the Mayor moved swiftly to build a new, experienced Executive Leadership Team; appointed a new LEP Chair; and commissioned an MCA Review to look into the organisation's governance structures and processes and ensure it is fit to deliver for the future. The review has already increased capacity and improved internal processes, based on feedback from partners.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Despite the period of transition facing the MCA and the challenges facing the region, the MCA Board has taken bold decisions to protect communities in the short-term; move onto a more strategic footing in the long-term; and deliver manifesto commitments.

The following sections provide a thematic summary of those decisions.

2.2 Fixing our public transport

- Difficult decisions have been taken to increase democratic control and long-term sustainability in our network:
 - An early decision was taken to **accelerate the franchising assessment process** for South Yorkshire's bus system - the legal process to evaluate whether the current bus system works for our region or whether a move towards franchising is appropriate.
 - In the Autumn, the MCA Board agreed to **bring Supertram back into public control and ownership** to stabilise the network, at the end of Stagecoach's franchise in 2024.
 - Securing a **£570m City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement** to fund investment which is now ongoing.

- This winter, the MCA Board took the difficult decision of agreeing to a 2% increase in the bus levy – the first increase in more than a decade – to **strengthen the long-term financial sustainability** of our bus network. The four councils agreed this despite historic pressures on local authority budgets.
- Whilst the MCA has taken the above steps to protect the future, it has faced severe challenges in the short-term: the on-going fallout of the pandemic; a 15% cut to the network by private bus companies; driver shortages; and the bid to Government for South Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, which was unsuccessful.
- In response to these challenges, the MCA has prioritised using its discretionary funding to:
 - Support patronage on the bus network and address the cost of living crisis, the Board agreed to **introduce a £2 bus fare cap** from 1 November 2022. This has supported 1.25m journeys in South Yorkshire (with over half of those coming from communities in the three most deprived areas).
 - **Extend the 18-21 “Zoom Beyond”** concession.
 - **Spending £5.2m to protect school routes** and providing an additional **£7.2m** for the bus network.
- Over the past year, the MCA will have spent **£167m on capital projects** in support of strategic transport projects and active travel, such as major investment in Parkgate, Rotherham; procuring a fleet of electric community transport minibuses; or our ZEBRA investment for a zero-emissions bus fleet.

2.3 Creating more and better jobs

- This year, the MCA will spend **£52m on employment and skills** – mainly our adult education budget but including bespoke interventions like Working Win and the bespoke Skills Bank – and **£15m on business support, development, trade and investment**.
- This funding is in addition to the ongoing **South Yorkshire Renewal Fund** spending programme, with Place Plans for all four Local Authorities expected to be in place by 2024.
- Our investment is yielding dividends: the share of South Yorkshire businesses classed as “high growth” is now level with Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region. The Mayor hosted South Yorkshire’s first **Tech Summit** in Barnsley, and launched the **tech welcome grants** scheme to encourage firms to relocate to South Yorkshire.
- New sources of funding for high growth, innovative firms have become available over the past year. Northern Gritstone – a collaboration between

the Universities of Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester – has **invested over £43m this year** in three high value university ‘spin-outs’ in the region.

- The Mayor lobbied Government for protected (and expanded) **funding for Working Win** pilots – helping those suffering with mental and physical illness back into the labour force. This programme is now secure for another two years.
- South Yorkshire’s **Ownership Hub** has now trained a network of seventy advisers across the region to support workers seeking to take ownership of their own firms – and we are helping improve access to finance for firms seeking to transition to employee ownership. The Ownership Hub model is now being emulated across the country, most notably being adopted by the Welsh Government.
- A significant amount of time and effort has been committed responding to the abrupt **closure of Doncaster Sheffield Airport**:
 - The Mayors of Doncaster and South Yorkshire have been at the forefront of the response to DSA’s closure, immediately mobilising **aviation market experts** and developing a **bridging finance offer** to keep the airport operational while alternative owners were identified.
 - Pursuing **legal action** against the Peel Group to maintain airport operations. Doncaster Council is now pursuing a **Compulsory Purchase Order** of the site as a step to restore operations.
 - Commissioning a South Yorkshire-led inquiry to learn from DSA’s closure.

2.4 Building a cleaner, greener South Yorkshire

- The Mayor announced his plans to launch a **South Yorkshire Citizens’ Assembly** to give communities across our region the chance to shape how we respond to the climate emergency.
- Supporting our high growth, green firms and economic assets, such as the **Ultimate Battery Company** in their recent relocation to Rotherham; and working towards deeper partnerships with Sheffield University’s **Translational Energy Research Centre**; and **Hybrid Air Vehicles** in their plans for new manufacturing facilities in Doncaster.
- The MCA Board agreed the **South Yorkshire Housing Framework**, a new consistent approach across South Yorkshire to tackling shared challenges facing both new construction and our existing housing stock - at a time when a third of South Yorkshire’s carbon emissions comes from our housing stock.
- Spending **over £55m on housing and infrastructure** this year, including £1.5m on flood alleviation plans. This includes major investment in **town centre regeneration** across South Yorkshire, such as supporting Barnsley’s Market Gate bridge, further investment in the Glassworks, and supporting Rotherham’s regeneration plans.

- Providing financial support for the **South Yorkshire Woodland Creation Project** – as part of the Mayor’s commitment to plant 1.4 million trees, one for every person in South Yorkshire – as part of our efforts to achieve a net zero region and to support nature recovery and biodiversity.

2.5 Making South Yorkshire the healthiest region in the country

- In the summer, the Mayor was appointed as **Chair of South Yorkshire’s Integrated Care Partnership** – bringing together those who plan and deliver health and care across South Yorkshire. The Partnership will publish its first Health Strategy for South Yorkshire shortly, fast-tracking a move towards preventative health interventions. The Mayor also formed a partnership with the **Harvard Bloomberg City Leadership Initiative**, to drive collaboration among providers and funders of early years support in South Yorkshire.
- This complements investment to consolidate South Yorkshire’s leadership at the cutting edge of children’s health - alongside projects like the Sheffield Hallam led **Early Years Community Research Centre**. Investments also include **the National Centre for Child Health Technology** at the Olympic Legacy Park.
- Progressing the Mayor’s manifesto commitment to host a **Mayor’s Health Advisory Panel**, led by Alan Walker, Professor of Social Policy and Social Gerontology at the University of Sheffield. This follows the appointment of Steven Pleasant as Advisor to the Mayor after leading Greater Manchester’s health and social care devolution work for a decade.
- The appointment of Barnsley’s **Ed Clancy OBE** – four-time Olympic medal winning cyclist - as **South Yorkshire’s Active Travel Commissioner**. Ed has already begun a programme of engagement across South Yorkshire, championing active travel in the region.

2.6 Doing politics differently

- The Mayor is committed to a transparent, collaborative approach to political leadership.
- This approach informs the Citizens’ Assembly; the Mayor’s community engagement around DSA; a commitment to visit each local authority’s Scrutiny Committee; and his focus on engaging the public. He has hosted quarterly **Mayor’s Question Times** and hosts a monthly **“Call Coppard”** radio show on BBC Radio Sheffield.
- The MCA has taken firm action to support our communities during times of crisis. In September, the Board agreed an **emergency cost of living response**, bringing forward millions of pounds of hardship spending in our local authorities, complementing our UK Shared Prosperity Fund activity; introducing the £2 bus fare cap, with most of the benefit going to

communities in our three most deprived areas; and funding a **food security programme** across South Yorkshire.

2.7 Looking forward to 2023/24

- The MCA is continuing to lobby the Government across its priorities. The March 2023 Budget is expected to provide clarity over **bus funding**, **Investment Zones**, Doncaster's bid to host **Great British Railways Headquarters**, and other programmes that are central to the objectives of the MCA.
- The coming year will also see further outcomes of the MCA Review and other policy development work initiated over the past year. The Mayor and MCA Board will seek to further advance the vision for South Yorkshire's cutting-edge economic assets; decarbonisation and tree planting efforts; expanded community engagement and inclusion in our economy and society; and raising the profile and ambitions of South Yorkshire nationally.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

To approve the content of the report and note the achievements of the Mayor and MCA Board over the last year.

3.2 Recommended Option

Option 1

4. Consultation on Proposal

4.1 N/A

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 N/A

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 N/A

7. Legal Implications and Advice

7.1 N/A

8. Human Resources Implications and Advice

8.1 N/A

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

9.1 N/A

10. Climate Change Implications and Advice

10.1 N/A

11. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

11.1 N/A

12. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

12.1 Appropriate communication and press statements will be issued in support of the report.