

Thursday, 18 May 2023

Ministerial & Key Stakeholder engagement

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Reason why exempt:	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Discussion
Strategic Priority	Cross Cutting

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Recommendations:

That LEP Board note the ministerial and key stakeholder engagement activity undertaken by the MCA and provide reflections on the implications and opportunities for South Yorkshire.

1. Introduction

This paper provides an update on the ministerial and key stakeholder engagement activity undertaken by the MCA, and invites feedback and discussion on these key areas.

2. Background

To achieve transformative and sustainable change in South Yorkshire, we must have effective relationships and partnerships with Government and key stakeholders. They provide opportunities for collaboration and funding that enable South Yorkshire to deliver on our economic objectives.

This report provides detail of engagement activity across the breadth of the MCA - including Economic Growth, Business, Trade & Investment, Skills & Education, Housing & Infrastructure, Transport, Health and Cultural & Creative Industries.

The emerging priorities of the Mayor and the organisation are supporting the development of a consistently positive narrative that will enable a more proactive stakeholder engagement approach, rather than one that is reactive in respect to external priorities and timelines.

3. What that means for South Yorkshire

Economic Growth, Business, Trade & Investment

At the Spring Budget, it was announced that South Yorkshire has been chosen to work with Government to design an Investment Zone in the region. This is a result of months of engagement with Government from SYMCA and our Local Authorities to demonstrate our capacity, capability and ambition for the region. We have also worked alongside the M10 to shape and influence Investment Zone policy to ensure a more practicable process and model. Our Chief Executive, alongside his counterparts in our Local Authorities, has also engaged with Director Generals across the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) to make the case for South Yorkshire.

Similarly, our Local Authorities have also been successfully engaging with Government to secure funding and partnerships.

- The Levelling Up Minister, Dehenna Davison, recently visited Barnsley, due to their successful £10.2m Levelling Up bid for Barnsley Futures.
- City of Doncaster Council have also secured a 'Levelling Up Partnership' with Government, which will trial a different way of collaborative working between Whitehall and Local Authorities to develop a deep understanding of interlinked issues affecting a 'place'. This will provide important and valuable lessons for the wider region.
- Rotherham Council were awarded funding for their third Levelling Up Fund bid in the Spring Budget, marking a clean sweep of 3/3 successful bids. They have also hosted visits from senior DLUHC officials in the past few months.
- Sheffield City Council continue to work closely with Whitehall officials on regeneration opportunities through the Brownfield Housing Fund project

The Mayor has held multiple meetings with the Investment Minister to champion the huge potential of South Yorkshire and share our ambition to unlock greater investment for the region. Officers are now working with the Office for Investment and the Northern Powerhouse team in the Department of Business and Trade on a pipeline of investable propositions. Likewise, officers are meeting with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to explore the potential of developing a place-based investment plan for the region. Conversations are also taking place with institutional investment firms to discuss collaboration opportunities and make the case for greater investment in the region.

SYMCA are highly supportive of the appointment of Andy Haldane to Chair the Industrial Board at University of Sheffield Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) for the next three years. Mr Haldane brings a wealth of experience which was demonstrated in his engagement at our Economic Summit in March 2022 and is a huge gain for the region.

Skills & Education

The Mayor has attended a number of events to promote the great work taking place across the region to raise our educational attainment rate and promote our skills offer. Some examples include speaking alongside MP Ed Miliband at the launch of the Rotherham Skills Academy Domestic Retrofit programme, which is funded through our Adult Education Budget, and

engaging with school children through a Q&A session at the South Yorkshire Schools' Climate Conference 2023

In June, Sheffield will be hosting the Northern Powerhouse Education, Employment and Skills Summit 2023 which has a stellar line up of speakers including; The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education, Lord David Blunkett, Former Secretary of State for Education, Lord Jim O'Neil, Vice-Chair, Northern Powerhouse Partnership and Lord Bob Kerslake, Chair, UK2070 Commission. This will provide an opportunity to showcase the region and underline the contribution South Yorkshire can make to unlocking the North's potential.

Transport

The Mayor has continued to lobby Government on the pressing Transport issues facing the region. On bus, he has been vocal on the need for a sustainable funding settlement and certainty on short-term funding, and held meetings with the Minister for Local Transport, Richard Holden, to press this case. On rail, he has continued to work with the other Northern Mayors to stand up for the passengers of the North in the face of continued underperformance from TransPennine Express. He has also met with the Minister for Rail, Huw Merriman, on more broad South Yorkshire specific rail issues.

The new Active Travel Commissioner has had a packed schedule of engagements to meet stakeholders in his first few months, including with academics, local skateboarding, cycling and walking groups and schools, among many others. He has also met with the Greater Manchester Active Travel Commissioner and her team to discuss best practice and potential areas of collaboration, as well as jointly writing to the Chancellor, with the Mayor, to raise concerns about national active travel funding reductions.

Health

On this emergent policy area broad engagement has taken place to explore the potential role of the MCA, led by the Mayor, including in his capacity as ICP Chair, and the Healthy Life Expectancy Adviser. This has included conversations with Sir Michael Marmot, DHSC, OHID, to determine the scope of problems facing the region.

The renewal of funding for Working Win represents a huge success of private and public engagement of Ministers, and officials, for a highly successful local programme. It also exemplifies a broader point that programmes designed at a regional level, to address local needs and issues, can deliver much more effective outcomes than they might when ran at a national level. Additionally, emerging conversations have begun between the MCA and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on closer working to address the links between work and health.

Further work has taken place through the Bloomberg Harvard Leadership Programme which has brought together eight systems leaders from across the region to deep dive into early years interventions to support improvement in healthy life expectancy.

Cultural & Creative Industries

The Mayor has recently convened a number of events related to the cultural and creative industries to deepen his understanding of the needs of the sector. He hosted 'Creative South Yorkshire' breakfast networking event in March for regional stakeholders and a roundtable discussion co-hosted with Creative UK in April. Discussions have commenced on the Mayor's

manifesto commitment to establish a South Yorkshire Cultural Forum, while relationships with national funders such as Arts Council England continue to mature with engagement led by the Arts, Culture and Heritage Project Director. This is complimented by ongoing sustained effort from our Local Authorities to strengthen relationships with national funders, noting the recent specification of Barnsley and Rotherham as Arts' Council 'Priority Places' and associated significant uplifts in funding allocations.

4. Discussion points

- Any additional insights on the national policy environment – have we captured everything of interest?
- Any feedback, advice or direction on activity of the MCA in response to the national policy environment?
- Any further detail required on MCA activities?
- Are there any policy areas LEP Board Members would welcome deeper discussions on?

5. Next Steps

This paper will be a standing item as requested at the previous LEP Board meeting.

Background Papers

07. National Policy Environment and Government Engagement South Yorkshire
Approach 12 01 23