

September 2019**Mayor's Update****Purpose of Report**

To provide LEP Board Members with an update on key Mayoral activity relating to the economic agenda.

1. Brexit

As the date by which we will leave the EU draws ever closer, the need for certainty on the terms by which we will do so becomes even greater. This is vital for businesses, people and communities across the City Region and beyond to plan for their own future.

It's absolutely right that this is on our agenda for today's meeting in terms of how we can best maximise the opportunities surrounding Brexit and mitigate the risk on the regional economy.

Amidst such uncertainty it's vital that we articulate our own vision for the future of the Sheffield City Region (SCR), which is why it's also timely that we are discussing our new Strategic Economic Plan and Local Industrial Strategy. Particularly, whilst globally economic growth is slowing down. As we must set out a bold vision, for transformative, inclusive growth, providing opportunities for all our people, businesses and communities.

2. Devolution

It was good to see the new Prime Minister in the North at the end of July. I welcomed his commitment to deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail, more powers for Metro Mayors and local authorities offering real devolution for our communities, providing better bus services and committing greater investment to the Stronger Towns Fund.

What the North really needs is a sustained programme of investment to level regional inequalities and unlock its huge potential.

We now need to see action, not just words. I am deeply committed to implementing the proposal that South Yorkshire leaders and I agreed earlier this year to unlock devolution and have written to the new Prime Minister to this effect. But I cannot do this alone.

This proposal will only become a reality by continuing to work with colleagues across the North and with the new Government. One Yorkshire Leaders, including myself, have set out new proposals to urgently unlock the benefits of devolution to all parts of the region while creating a pathway to a full One Yorkshire devolution deal in 2022, in a letter to the Prime Minister.

As part of the 'M9' group of metro mayors in England, we have also made the case for the need for a bolder and more ambitious devolution policy. As one of the most centralised countries amongst OECD nations, with UK local government controlling only 1.6% of GDP in comparison to 6% in France, 11% in Germany and 16% in Sweden there is a strong case for more decisions to be made much closer to local people.

3. Convention for the North, with the Northern Powerhouse 11

Sheffield City Region is set to host the biggest ever Convention of the North with NP11, on Friday 13 September at Magna Science Adventure Centre, in Rotherham. Bringing together the North's political, business, community and academic leaders, along with young people's groups to discuss their common agenda, of the future of the North.

The Convention will make a powerful, unified case to the new Prime Minister and Government for tangible investment in the Northern Powerhouse, putting it at the top of the economic agenda, so that it can fulfil its potentially transformational role in the future of the UK.

4. Integrated Rail Plan

In July I launched an ambitious new plan for the future of the Sheffield City Region's rail network. The Integrated Rail Plan, has been welcomed by the Department for Transport. It was produced by Sheffield City Region and its local authority partners, supported by organisations including Transport for the North.

It sets out a vision for how the region will be better connected by both high speed and conventional rail networks into the future – regionally, across the North, and nationally.

The plan recognises that, while the benefits of national investment in HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), should be maximised, there needs to be ongoing, complementary investment in the local and regional rail and road networks. By doing this, the plan can best improve capacity, reliability, affordability, and journey times for communities and businesses across the Sheffield City Region.

Key elements of the plan include a proposed new Barnsley Dearne Valley railway station, with the preferred location on a site in Goldthorpe; the creation of a new Midland Main Line station in Rotherham; an East Coast Main Line railway station at Doncaster Sheffield Airport; extension of the Tram-Train, the upgrade of the Hope Valley Line; and significant upgrades of the railway stations at both Sheffield and Chesterfield, to accommodate HS2 services.

5. Free travel passes for those on employment schemes

The Mayoral Combined Authority has agreed to offer free travel passes from the 1st October to people taking part in selected employment support schemes across South Yorkshire.

£330,000 is being made available to offer time limited free travel on public transport to eligible participants in the following schemes:

- The Working Win Health Led Employment Trial
- The Work and Health Programme
- Pathways to Progression
- Pathways to Success

The free passes will be made available to support people accessing these schemes and transitioning into work. The four employment schemes have so far supported approximately 7000 people who are either out of work or struggling in employment due to a physical or mental health condition.

6. Statutory Officer Appointment

The MCA at its June 2019 meeting made a number of decisions regarding the Statutory Officer roles:

- Mr Steve Davenport, has commenced in the role of the Monitoring Officer.
- The process to appoint an Interim MCA Group Finance Director is scheduled for w/c 2nd September. There will be a process to recruit to the substantive post commencing in October/ November.
- The process to recruit the CEX (Head of Paid Service) on a fixed term basic until June 2022 is now underway and is scheduled to be concluded by the 27th September 2019.