

23rd September 2019

DEVOLUTION UPDATE

Purpose of Report

This report updates the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) on the work underway to implement the proposal agreed by the South Yorkshire Leaders and the Mayor in March.

Thematic Priority

Cross cutting

Freedom of Information and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

The paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme

Recommendations

Members of the MCA are asked to note the devolution update.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2019, the four Leaders and the Mayor agreed a proposal to bring devolution to the region. Articulated through a [letter](#) to the Secretary of State (SofS), this set out the Authority's position as:
- We all support the greater devolution of powers and funding from Westminster and Whitehall to local government and combined authorities, albeit that we have different views as to how that should happen.
 - We are all clear that we should and will actively support each other in the achievement of our individual devolution ambitions. Each council has the right to make its own choices about its devolution arrangements, including the right to join, or not to join, a wider Yorkshire grouping from the outset if that is what individual places wish to do.
 - None of that should be to the detriment of any individual council that wishes to remain in the current devolution arrangements.
 - We all want to see the [SCR deal powers](#) and funding unlocked, in place and used up until the end of this current mayoral term in 2022. Our view is that Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, Sheffield Combined Authority (SCR MCA) should remain in its current form until the end of this term.
 - At the end of this current Mayoral term, those councils that do not see their future in a South Yorkshire arrangement must be free to join an alternative devolution group. The

residual Mayoral SCR CA (which is comparable in scale with Cambridgeshire / Peterborough and larger than Tees Valley MCA) must benefit from the retention of powers as provided for by the current SCR deal and proportionate resources calculated pro rata, accounting for current and future funding arrangements. This is what we refer to above as “no detriment”.

- We understand that this will require your [the SofS] officers to draw up a Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Order, which provides relevant powers and related governance arrangements. Such an order would require the consent of each of us.

1.2 The [SofS](#) responded positively to the MCA’s letter, which welcomed the authority’s pragmatic solution and commitment to move forward. This confirmed, that, in principle, if all four councils and the mayor consent to the necessary order, Government would be prepared to implement the 2015 Deal with an understanding that after 2022 those councils that do not see their future in the City Region should be free to join an alternative wider Yorkshire devolution group. This would leave SCR with a commensurately reduced devolution deal and with appropriate arrangements in place to maintain an effective integrated transport system.

1.3 Since this letter was received, a new Prime Minister, Cabinet and thus Secretary of State have taken office. One Yorkshire Leaders have subsequently set out new proposals to urgently unlock the benefits of devolution while creating a pathway to a full One Yorkshire devolution deal in 2022, for those authorities that wish to form part of this. Set out in a [letter to the Prime Minister](#), this is founded on a series of interim devolution deals being agreed across Yorkshire to run in parallel with the existing SCR agreement.

1.4 During a [speech](#) at the Convention of the North with the Northern Powerhouse 11 (NP11) at Magna on the 13th September, the Prime Minister set out a commitment to devolution in the region. He stated that:

“We are going to do devolution properly. We are going to maximise the power of the north with more mayors across the whole of the north.

And I know there is real enthusiasm for devolution in Yorkshire and I welcome the establishment of a Yorkshire Committee as a practical step for facilitating greater collaboration on a Yorkshire-wide basis.

In the meantime, we are committed to getting the Sheffield City Region done – and I also want to open up negotiations with Leeds and West Yorkshire so we can make a mayor work there too, whatever the nature of any longer term arrangements in Yorkshire.”

2. Proposal and justification

2.1 That members of the MCA note the update provided on the progression of devolution in the region.

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

3.1 Not applicable; update paper, for information only.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

Not applicable; update paper, for information only.

4.2 Legal

Not applicable; update paper, for information only.

4.3 Risk Management

Not applicable; update paper, for information only.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

Not applicable; update paper, for information only.

5. Communications

5.1 Not applicable; update paper, for information only.

6. Appendices/Annexes

6.1 Not applicable

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report are available for inspection at: 11 Broad Street West, Sheffield S1 2BQ

Other sources and references: