

January 2020

Mayor's Update

Purpose of Report

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

1. Flooding

The floods in early November had a devastating impact across South Yorkshire and particularly in Doncaster. With more than 1,000 homes flooded or unliveable and a further 350 businesses directly and indirectly affected, it will take many months to recover and my thoughts remain with those affected.

Since these events took place, I have been working with Government to secure additional resources to support those affected. I welcome the recent commitment from the Secretary of State to provide up to £1m of match funding for the South Yorkshire Community Foundation appeal, which has already raised more than half a million pounds.

I am continuing to work with the local authorities to develop a summary of the region's flood defence needs, to ensure that the region is more resilient to the increased levels of rainfall experienced as part of our changing climate. This will then be presented to Government to secure the vital investment needed to provide the much-needed protection for our communities and businesses.

2. Climate Emergency

At the November meeting the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) agreed to declare a climate emergency in the region. Addressing this issue is the biggest challenge facing the world but is one where everybody needs to play their part to help secure our planet's future.

The MCA is now developing a plan to ensure that we deliver our part, working with our region's two Universities. However, given the important role of the LEP in the region I would welcome the Board's support in taking this forward. I believe that we have a unique set of capabilities within the region that mean we can lead the way on the climate change agenda.

3. Bus Review

I am in regular contact with Clive Betts MP to discuss progress on the independent review of bus services which I appointed Clive to lead. The review has been continuing apace. Extensive stakeholder engagement, including hearings and workshops with user groups and operators, has been supplemented by a survey of users (and non-users) which has had over 7,000 responses. The findings are being analysed for insights into the customer experience and expectations of bus services in South Yorkshire.

Clive and the commissioners are now in the process of drafting their report which will be submitted to me in March and shared with the LEP board shortly after. The report will articulate a wide range of findings, conclusions and recommendations for substantial change. Emerging systemic issues

include: the collective leadership of buses across our region, accountability and the major challenge of funding. The latter is something which I am keen to engage central government on but also includes assessment of the new powers given to me in the Bus Services Act 2017 – including franchising which will be the highest profile issue the review addresses. I am confident that the recommendations will be ambitious and will put customers back at the heart of regional bus service delivery.

4. Culture Strategy

South Yorkshire has a growing range of cultural assets that make a significant contribution to the region's economy. This sector continues to have the potential to grow further, making a greater contribution to the region's economy, sustainable jobs, urban centre regeneration and social cohesion.

Whilst there are significant strengths and opportunities in the region the broad story of the Sheffield City Region visitor economy, arts and culture offer is that participation and engagement rates of our communities are too low, that the region is undercapitalised in terms of investment from bodies such as the Arts Council, there are too few projects of scale, there is a need for greater collaboration and the offer is not promoted effectively.

Given both the opportunities and challenges facing the sector throughout 2020 I will be working to grow the region's cultural, arts and heritage assets, building on the existing successes that have already been achieved.

5. The value of music in the region's economy

In December UK Music published an independent report into the music sector across South Yorkshire. The aim of the report was to understand the music industry as it is now and identify areas in which the region can drive forward change and grow the music sector.

The report concludes that music tourism adds more than £92 million to the Sheffield City Region economy each year. It also set out five recommendations to continue to grow the contribution of the sector to the economy, including by attracting investment and creating jobs. These are:

- **Opportunities for emerging talent** – ensuring that all young people, regardless of their background, should have access to music in education and should be able to pursue a career in music.
- **Protecting grassroots music venues** – offering business rate relief and help with licencing to venues as well as improving accessibility at venues for deaf and disabled audiences and performers.
- **Developing music businesses** – leverage powers to support the growth of the music businesses which in turn will increase employment and productivity.
- **Integrating Transport** – creating a transport system that is fit for purpose and that supports the night time economy.
- **Reaching out to every corner of the region** – Mapping all music activity across the region recognising that different parts of the region have different needs and challenges.

The SCR Music Board will now consider how these should be taken forward through its work. I would like to put on record my thanks to Laura Bennett for all of her hard work and dedication in chairing the Board.