

10th September 2020

MCA THEMATIC BOARDS

Purpose of Report

To update Members of the proposed changes to the MCA Thematic Board arrangements.

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

Board note the proposed changes to the MCA Thematic Boards and provide comments on the proposals.

1. Introduction

1.1 Thematic Boards were first established by the MCA in early 2019. The rationale for these Boards includes:

- Achieving an efficient, effective and transparent model for decision making;
- Collaborating to build collective and combined decisions to deliver the outcomes identified in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP);
- Providing strong and accountable leadership in setting the agenda and delivering a defined programme of activity to rigorously realise the outcomes of the SEP; and
- Scrutinising the planned and ongoing activity to deliver the best outcomes for the region and value for money

1.2 The MCA has now secured, by Parliamentary Order, the additional powers and gainshare funding agreed as part of the devolution deal. This has necessitated the Mayor, Leaders and the MCA Executive reviewing the effectiveness of the Thematic Boards and proposing amended arrangements to best reflect a proposed new operating model, ensuring that the Members of the MCA, in conjunction with the private sector LEP Board Members, take a lead in driving forward priorities. Section 2 sets out the main changes proposed.

2. Proposal and justification

2.1 The proposed new operating model will be based on the principle of the Thematic Board Co-chairs from the LEP and MCA, supported by cabinet members from the Districts, with Chief Executives providing advice to the Co-chairs. Each Board will own and lead on a policy theme

and will be supported by MCA Officers in order to shape, craft and direct positions early and in advance of formal decision making. To ensure the effectiveness of this the detail of this engagement will be bespoke to the requirements of each thematic area and to the preferences of the Co-chairs, whilst working within a common framework.

Linked to the formal governance changes the Mayor, Leaders, Chief Executives and LEP Co-chairs are establishing arrangements to ensure that there is significant cross working and communication between Boards.

2.2 New Proposals

The proposed new Thematic Board structure is as follows:

Number - the number of Thematic Boards to be reduced from 5 to 4 as follows:

1. Business Recovery and Growth;
2. Education, Skills and Employability;
3. Transport and the Environment; and
4. Housing and Infrastructure.

The new policy areas and remit of these Boards, indicated by the title, reflect the priorities of the new Strategic Economic Plan (2020-2040) which is currently under consultation.

2.3 Membership - the proposed Membership make up is as follows:

1. Co-chairs (1 Constituent Council Leader and 1 LEP Board Member);
2. Lead Chief Executive from Constituent Council;
3. MCA Executive Officer (Chief Executive/Director level);
4. Elected Member from each Constituent Authority;
5. Second LEP Board Member

2.4 Initial LEP Board representation/Membership is as set out Below, the MCA Meeting on the 27th September will determine the SCR Leader and Chief Executive representation:

	MCA Member (co-chair)	LEP Member (Co-chair)	Lead Chief Executive	SCR Officer	Con Council Member x4	2nd LEP Member
Business Recovery and Growth Board	TBD	Neil MacDonald	TBD	Dave Smith	TBD	Richard Stubbs
Education, skills and employability Board	TBD	Nigel Brewster	TBD	Dave Smith	TBD	Chris Husbands
Transport and the Environment Board	TBD	Peter Kennan	TBD	Mark Lynam	TBD	TBD
Housing and Infrastructure Board	TBD	Owen Michaelson	TBD	Mark Lynam	TBD	Tan Khan

2.5 Frequency of Meetings

The frequency of meetings is a matter that is being reviewed. At present each Board meet at least on an 8-week cycle aligned to the 8-week MCA meeting schedule. The structure allows each Board to hold additional meetings, dependent on business need. Each Board may also determine to have informal intermediate meetings where discussion is required mid-cycle.

LEP Board Members thoughts on the appropriateness of the present arrangements and alternatives would be welcomed.

2.6 Transparency

This area is being reviewed, at present:

- papers are made available to the public 5 clear working days before the meeting
- the public can submit questions and receive a written response.
- minutes made available to the public within 10 working days of the meeting taking place; and
- The meetings are not held in public.

LEP Board Members thoughts on the appropriateness of the present arrangements and alternatives would be welcomed.

2.7 Advisory Boards

It is proposed that the following Advisory Boards formally report as follows (this will give the Boards a formal place in the governance arrangements of the MCA):

- Joint Assets Board (existing Board) – Report to the Housing and Infrastructure Board.
- Growth Hub Board (existing Board)–Report to the Business Recovery and Growth Board
- Skills Advisory Network Board (new Board)– Advisory Board reporting to the Education, Skills and Employment Board. **NB. The Skills Advisory Network Board is a requirement of Adult Education Budget devolution.**

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1 Remain unchanged - the review of the working of Thematic Boards has recommended the changes set out in this paper as the changes will mean that the 4 Thematic Boards better align to the SEP

4. Implications

4.1 Financial

None

4.2 Legal

None specifically arising from this report. Given these Boards are not formal sub-committees of the MCA (as they include Members who are not MCA Members) the formal decision making function is delegated to an officer of the MCA who will either act in accordance with the unanimous decision of the Board or refer the decision to the MCA/LEP.

4.3 Risk Management

Nothing specific arising from this report.

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

Nothing specific arising from this report.

5. Communications

5.1 Not applicable

6. Appendices/Annexes

6.1 None

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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