

25 January 2021

Geographic Focus and brand of the MCA and future collaboration with the MCA's non-constituent authorities

Purpose of Report

To update Members on work underway with Non-Constituent Member Authorities to agree future arrangements for collaboration and engagement.

To confirm MCA Members' wish in principle to begin preparatory work for rebranding of the MCA as the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (or variant thereof).

Thematic Priority

Cross-cutting – Governance.

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

The paper will be available under the Combined Authority Publication Scheme.

Recommendations

That MCA Members take a decision in principle to rebrand the MCA so that necessary preparations can occur for rebranding timed to follow May's local elections.

Additionally, Members are invited to identify any issues they would like to be considered as part of the exercise underway on future engagement with Non-Constituent Authorities.

1. Introduction

- 1.1** This paper reports back on the Mayor's recent meeting with the Leaders of the MCA's Non-Constituent member authorities convened in order to solicit views on possible future arrangements for continuing purposeful engagement – the backcloth being that all MCA/LEP funding and decision making now relates directly to the South Yorkshire administrative footprint only.
- 1.2** Additionally, with the Government's agreement in July 2020 to a Devolution Deal for the MCA and with this being focused on the geographic and administrative footprint of South Yorkshire, the opportunity presents to rebrand the MCA, if the MCA so wishes, to become the 'South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority' or a variant thereof (rather than the Sheffield City Region MCA).

2. Proposal and justification

- 2.1 A positive meeting between the Mayor and the Leaders of the MCA's Non-Constituent Member Authorities recognised that these Authorities had been an important and valued component of the Combined Authority since its inception.

While some had hoped, when the SCR MCA was established, that the Non-Constituent Members would eventually become full Constituent Members, the Government's decision to change the geographies of Local Economic Partnerships and the agreement of an SCR Devolution Deal last year had resulted in all funding for the SCR MCA now being South Yorkshire focused.

As a result, although the perspective which the Non-Constituent Authorities bring to cross boundary issues remains important, there is decreasing direct interest in MCA business from the perspective of non-constituent members who, technically, do not have voting rights except to the extent the Constituent Council Members and the Mayor agree that they can vote on a matter. Given all future business is South Yorkshire related it is unlikely that voting rights would be given.

It was agreed that the MCA Chief Executive conduct a short exercise involving Chief Executives of the Non Constituent Authorities to consider the future direction of their engagement. Dave Smith will lead this work and report back on options in the Spring.

- 2.2 Renaming of the MCA from the SCR to SYCA, or a variant, would potentially reflect better the identification residents across the region have with 'South Yorkshire' rather than the current 'Sheffield City Region' brand. The SCR brand was developed to recognise a wider economic footprint taking in the geography of the non-constituent Council areas. As this no longer applies to the LEP or the Mayor and as described above no longer relates to the core business of the MCA it may be considered appropriate to change the name and rebrand.

An opportune moment to introduce the new brand could be after the local elections, assuming these proceed, in May. The period from end-Jan to May will be used to prepare costed proposals, including proposed changes to marketing as well as nomenclature (the website, logo, building name and other branding, including considerations around integration with the PTE).

If agreeable in principle, costed rebranding proposals will be worked up allowing for a final decision on implementation to be taken at May's MCA meeting.

3. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 3.1 Non-Constituent Members to become non attending members – regarded as unattractive without considering how to improve engagement generally.
- 3.2 Leaving the name / brand as is. In these circumstances marketing and communications will be required to re-establish the SCR MCA brand.

4. Implications

- 4.1 **Financial**
None at this stage on branding given agreement in principle only is being sought. Costed proposals will aim to stay within existing budgets and clearance sought as appropriate.

4.2 Legal

The Non-Constituent Members are legally non-voting Members, but the Constituent Members can, by resolution, allow them to vote on any matter. Any change to the legal status of the Non-Constituent Members would require secondary legislation. Changing the branding will not alter the legal name of the MCA (the Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield Combined Authority).

A formal (legal) name change can be implemented by a resolution of the MCA agreed by at least 2/3rds of the voting Members.

4.3 Risk Management

None

4.4 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

None except in as far as a rebrand 'South Yorkshire' may be deemed to be more inclusive and show greater recognition of the region's diversity than the SCR brand.

5. Communications

5.1 None proposed

6. Appendices/Annexes

6.1 None.

Report Author	Stephen Batey
Post	Director of the Mayor's Office
Officer responsible	Dave Smith, Chief Executive
Organisation	SCR MCA Executive
Email	stephen.batey@sheffieldcityregion.org.uk
Telephone	

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: