

March 2021

Chief Executive's Update

Purpose of Report

To provide LEP Board Members with a general update on activity being undertaken by the LEP outside of the agenda items under discussion.

1. South Yorkshire Freeport bid

In February, the region officially launched its bid for a South Yorkshire Freeport, centred around Doncaster Sheffield Airport and the iPort logistics hub. If successful, the Freeport will create 28,700 new jobs in advanced manufacturing including rail, automotive, defence and aerospace, and double the number of higher-level apprenticeships. We expect to find out in spring if our bid is successful. Other known competing bids are: Tees Valley, Humber, Liverpool, Bristol, Plymouth, East Midlands Airport, Thames, Felixstowe/Harwich, Tyne, Cumbria, Southampton/Portsmouth, Gatwick Airport and Bournemouth.

2. Chambers of Commerce Skills Roundtables

SCR MCA is working with the region's Chambers of Commerce on a series of focus groups to gain intelligence on business skills gaps and needs. This work is being part-funded by the DfE. In its recent White Paper, DfE set out plans to see business groups, specifically including Chambers of Commerce, working alongside colleges to develop tailored skills plans to meet local training needs. The SCR MCA will use this work as a starting point for future activity as areas of the Government's White Paper are further developed.

3. India Roundtable events

Last month, two successful international Roundtable events took place to enhance relationships and increase trading opportunities between the city region and India. Delegates, included Mayor Dan Jarvis MP and The Mayor of Pune Murlidhar Mohol, Vikram Kumar, the Municipal Commissioner for Pune, Sir Nigel Knowles, the CEO of DWF and International Advisor to Mayor Jarvis, Dame Sarah Storey, Active Travel Commissioner for Sheffield City Region, David Latimer, the CEO of Sheffield-based company Magnomatics, and the Vice Chancellors of the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University. The group discussed areas for potential collaboration and investment, including active and urban transport systems, climate action through a low carbon economy, water and waste management, trade, investment and business partnerships. There was a particular focus on the transfer of knowledge and technology between industries, research institutions and universities.

4. Covid-19 Business Input Group

This group continues to meet on a fortnightly basis to secure a business view on where the region's support should be targeted. The group continue to receive policy and data insights on the impact of covid-19 and provide business insight and intelligence on the shape of our business support response. It is chaired by Lucy Nickson and includes members from the FSB, MakeUK, CBI, Chambers of Commerce, the trade unions and other business groups.

5. LEP Peer Review

The LEP is participating in the national programme of LEP Peer reviews. Peer reviews are intended to provide the opportunity for LEPs to draw on good practice, share experiences and provide a forum for new learning and development. We are twinned with West Yorkshire LEP and will be working with them to build our joint working arrangements.