

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority
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27 February 2019

SCR Overview and Scrutiny Committee members
Sent by Email

Dear Committee members,

Further to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 17th January we agreed to write to Committee members with our response to the two questions raised regarding Equality Impact Assessments and devolution funding. Please find below my response to these two issues.

1. **Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked for information regarding how if the SCR is investing in buildings does it ensure they are fit for the modern world in respect of the protected characteristics?**

In developing policy and projects for which the Mayoral Combined Authority(MCA) is the scheme sponsor the SCR undertakes Equality Impact Assessments as relevant to the initiative. For example, a full assessment was undertaken for the Working Win programme to support people back into employment. In addition, in considering the management of its own assets the City Region considers how to ensure that these meet the needs of all communities and people. For example, the improvements being made to its Broad Street West building are in part designed to create an accessible suite of meetings rooms that are tailored to the different needs of those with protected characteristics.

However, for those schemes where the Sheffield City Region MCA is the funder of building improvements, rather than the delivery agent or sponsor it does not currently undertake Equality Impact Assessments. Instead all delivery agents who the MCA enters into contracts with are obliged to conform with our standard clauses on ensuring equality and diversity in accordance with all applicable equality laws (whether in relation to age, race, disability, gender, religion, sexual orientation and gender reassignment).

In regards to the MCAs investment in buildings, the Building Regulations cover physical disability characteristics in commercial and residential buildings, and visual and auditory impairment for buildings that are accessed by the public. Our assurance that buildings partly funded by the SCR are fit for purpose is provided by the Building Inspector's sign-off on the building.

There is currently no statutory requirement for buildings to accommodate other protected characteristics such as gender neutral or unisex toilets or the installation of a Prayer Room. These provisions are at the discretion of the building owner and/or tenant.

2. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked for information on any funding SCR had missed out on to date as a result of the devolution deal not being concluded.

The 2015 SCR Devolution Deal poses an opportunity for the City Region to benefit from additional funds, which it has not been able to access to date. These are:

- Unlocking an additional £900m of funding for economic development, over a 30-year period – the Gainshare pot. Decisions on what this money should be invested in will be made by the MCA.
- Enabling the area to retain 100% of all business rate growth experienced, above the forecast baseline.
- Accessing £5m for the Early intervention pilot to help those that are not currently in work, but who are seeking to access to employment.

In addition, a number of other sources of powers and influence have been made available since the deal was agreed with Government in 2015. These are:

- The SCR MCA could benefit from wider borrowing powers than just for transport schemes as currently; representing a significant opportunity to successfully manage the area's investment profile.
- Gain control over the 19+ adult education budget, equating to c.£35m per annum, note this is not new money to the City Region but would see the MCA establishing the strategy for this funding as opposed to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Whilst this was part of the 2015 Deal, all MCAs are not receiving control of this funding until the 2019/20 academic year.
- Provide the City Region with 'as of right' access to the additional resources being made available to other metro mayors, for example, the Transforming Cities Fund. If the SCR received the same per capita allocation as other MCAs this would equate to a £155m of funding.
- Enable the City Region to enter into discussions with Government regarding the devolution of additional powers and resources, as has taken place in other MCAs.

I hope you find this information helpful in respect of these questions.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Dave Smith

Managing Director