

May 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. Quarterly Economic Survey and The Skills for Recovery in South Yorkshire Report

The MCA and LEP have been working with the region's Chambers of Commerce to gain intelligence on business skills gaps and needs. This work, which has been part-funded by the DfE, has included focus groups and data from current and previous Quarterly Economic Surveys. The Report has found that businesses are in a strong position for growth over the coming 12-18 months. However, shifts in the operating environment over the past 12 months have caused many businesses to review business models, meaning that skills requirements coming out of the pandemic may not necessarily be the same as those going into it.

2. Chambers of Commerce Policy Director

South Yorkshire's three Chambers of Commerce (Doncaster, Rotherham & Barnsley, Sheffield) have jointly appointed a Policy Director to work across the region. The creation of this role further strengthens and unifies the policy functions of the local chambers. The MCA and LEP continue to build on its strong relationship with its local chambers and look forward to working with the new Policy Director.

3. DfE Flexi-apprenticeships consultation

The LEP and MCA will respond to a DfE consultation which seeks views on its plans for flexi-job apprenticeship schemes as a means to increase the use of apprenticeships in certain sectors and professions. Portable apprenticeships schemes enable apprentices to move between employers in industries where short-term contracts are the norm. The MCA response will consider how flexi-job apprenticeship schemes could support the growth of apprenticeships in South Yorkshire.

4. Response to the Northern Culture APPG

The MCA is working with partners across South Yorkshire's Arts, Culture and Heritage sector on a submission to a Northern Culture Inquiry by the Northern Culture APPG. The Inquiry intends to explore the question: 'What does Northern Culture need to rebuild, rebalance and recover?' and asks for evidence on how to level-up opportunities to increase diversity, sustainability, accessibility and resilience in Northern Culture. This is an opportunity to highlight both the challenges and successes of our work and will also provide the MCA with more evidence to help future lobbying and funding applications.

5. Business Advisory Group

The Covid-19 Business Input Group was established at the start of the crisis to respond to the immediate and unfolding impacts of the pandemic on businesses and the workforce. As the region moves from crisis response to longer term recover and growth, the LEP recognises an ongoing need to bring key business representative organisations together to get their latest positions, share information and insights, and to help shape the region's economic response. The group will continue to meet on a regular basis and will be chaired by LEP Chair James Muir. Areas for future substantive discussion include physical regeneration and urban vitality, business growth, innovation, trade and investment, skills and employment, and government engagement.