

July 2019**Mayor's Update****Purpose of Report**

To provide LEP Board Members with an update on key Mayoral activity relating to the economic agenda.

1. Brexit

As the uncertainty regarding who will be the next Prime Minister continues, the date by which we will leave the EU draws ever closer. In parallel, economic growth is slowing down. The evidence base for the refresh of our Economic Plan highlights that whilst the SCR economy is growing, it is not changing its relative position and its sector and skills base make it less resilient.

All of these factors mean it is vital for our businesses and communities to have certainty, so they can plan for the future. This includes the process by which we will leave the EU and the terms of the future trading relationship.

The SCR Executive is continuing to monitor business intelligence form across the region regarding potential impacts and develop its own plans for the various scenarios that may arise.

2. Active Travel

Sheffield City Region's first Active Travel Commissioner has outlined four pledges which will guide her work in the region over the next 12 months. Dame Sarah Storey announced her ambitions at the first summit of active travel commissioners from across the country. Held in Manchester, the summit was attended by all of the UK's Cycling and Walking or Active Travel Commissioners.

Dame Sarah's four pledges include: being led by communities; enabling walking and cycling rather than encouraging it; requiring infrastructure to meet or exceed requirements; and requiring infrastructure to be accessible for all.

At its meeting on the 20th June, the Transport for the North Board discussed active travel for the first time. This represents an important recognition of this agenda and that this needs to be an integrated part of our strategic approach to transport across the region.

3. Bus Review

The four Commissioners who will undertake the Bus Review, chaired by Clive Betts MP, have now been announced. These are:

- Peter Kennan – Chair of Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry Transport Forum and Local Enterprise Partnership Board member;
- Kristine Beuret OBE – Director of Social Research Associates (SRA);
- Stephen Joseph – Former CEO of Campaign for Better Transport; and
- Martin Mayer – Secretary Sheffield TUC, UNITE the UNION and retired bus driver.

To support the completion of the Review and to better understand perceptions around the bus

system a short survey has been launched¹. Running until the 31st August, this has already received more than 2,000 responses and I would urge people to complete it and give their views.

4. First Bus

Following productive meetings between Unite and First South Yorkshire the immediate threat of industrial action has lifted. Discussions between the two parties are continuing - at present no further action is planned.

Separately, I have written to Giles Fearnley, MD of First Bus, seeking a meeting regarding the decision to separate First's UK Bus activities from the Group. My primary concern is that the services First operate in South Yorkshire will continue to function without disruption - both during the sale and once any new owners are in place.

While I have been given reassurance that current commitments will be maintained, my concern is any sale of the South Yorkshire business to a new owner will possibly result in changes to current service provision, fares and network coverage.

There are very clear risks arising both from the uncertainty created by the decision and the - as yet unknown - intentions of any future owner. Stephen Edwards from SYPTTE is keeping me updated.

5. M9 meeting

I recently met with my fellow metro mayors, where we welcomed Jamie Driscoll to the meeting, the newly elected Mayor for the North of the Tyne. Key items for discussion were the further devolution of powers and resources from government, with the need to make a compelling case for this through the Comprehensive Spending Review and to a new Prime Minister (and cabinet). With local government controlling only 1.6% of GDP in the UK, compared to 6% in France, 11 % in Germany, and 16% in Sweden², it is clear that there is a need for Government to do more.

6. Shared Prosperity Fund

In the absence of a government consultation being launched on the Shared Prosperity Fund, I led a debate, and spoke in another, in Parliament, where I set out my principles for how the fund should be designed. As the successor to the Local Growth Fund and Europeans Structural Funds, which resulted in excess of half a billion pounds of investment in the area over the last 5 years, it is vital that we secure an approach that works for the Sheffield City Region.

7. Cooperative Panel

The inaugural meeting of the Mayoral Co-operative Advisory Panel is due to take place on Monday 1 July during 'Co-op Fortnight' – a nationwide event celebrating and promoting the role of co-operative approaches and values. My intention is that the Panel will bring a 'co-operative perspective' to some of the SCR's key policy agendas and offer practical ideas and recommendations for consideration.

The Panel will engage in topics of its choosing, for example the bus review – where there is a community transport sector dimension; work being undertaken to promote financial inclusion and financial capability by the research group Demos; and not forgetting the SEP itself where a co-operative perspective may add genuine value.

The Panel, which at 6 is very small, comprises a mix of local elected figures from the Co-op movement and business sectors.

¹ <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MCVNLH6>

² https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/devolution_-_a_capital_idea_lfc_2017.pdf