

## Mayoral Priorities and Plans

This paper provides OSC with a short update from Officers on the key priorities that the Mayor has set with the Executive Team for the remainder of this financial year and on which programmes of activity are underway.

The note includes an update on:

- 1) Public Transport
- 2) Active Travel
- 3) Environment and Net Zero
- 4) Skills and Education
- 5) Arts, Culture and Heritage
- 6) Levelling Up and securing further resources to deliver
- 7) South Yorkshire Renewal Fund
- 8) Organisation

- 1) **PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** is a principal focus. The bus review, transport strategy, integrated rail plan and work on active travel are all key components of a broad agenda. Gainshare resources have been invested in new bus infrastructure, new concessions introduced, and government support secured to keep the bus and tram network running through the pandemic.

In the next six months there are some critical points:

- a. Landing the maximum possible resource in the Spending Review based on our Sustainable Transport (CRSTS) bid/submission, and ensuring deployment of this is strategically focused to accelerate our public transport agenda, especially on buses. The CRSTS is expected to be in the order of £400-£660M of funding over a 5-year period to deliver improved public transport, support active travel, deliver on net zero ambitions and connect communities to opportunities. This includes critical resource for kickstarting the renewal of our Supertram system, putting bus at the heart of our transport system, continuing delivery of a 620-mile network of new walking and cycling active travel infrastructure, improving the region's roads and ramping up rail;
- b. Securing commitment to our £50m Levelling Up Fund proposal which focuses on improving the passenger journey experience on public transport in South Yorkshire. This includes upgrading and renewing up to 1500 bus shelters and up to 100 tram shelters to improve accessibility and provide additional seating, increasing passenger access to 'live' journey information by installing approx. 1000 passenger information displays, and over £16m of investment to tackle congestion in key pinch point and hot spot areas across South Yorkshire;
- c. Completing the draft Bus Services Improvement Plan by the end of October and commencing consultation, with operators, user groups and the public, on the BSIP/Enhanced Partnership arrangements in the New Year. The emerging BSIP focuses on how we can incentivise a transformation in bus use with proposed measures grouped around three drivers: increased quality, reliability and a better value service, as well as the net zero transition. Measures to do this might include developing a refreshed Customer Charter, limiting major service changes to twice a year and price rises to once a year, developing day and week price capping to guarantee best value etc.

- d. January's MCA will be taking a decision as to whether or not to begin a formal investigative process into the merits of franchising. This is not a decision to be taken lightly because an investigation, although not a decision to commit, will be costly (Greater Manchester spent the better part of £15m before deciding to proceed with franchising and, although the costs in South Yorkshire are unlikely to be comparable, the MCA will wish to be clear about the resourcing implications and timescale).

- 2) **ACTIVE TRAVEL:** AT investment in our transport infrastructure plans has been mainstreamed across the MCA transport agendas. Our £160m Transforming Cities Fund bid included 50% of planned investment targeted at AT interventions. Implementation has been led by the Active Travel Commissioner, Dame Sarah Storey supported by a Project Director. Work is integrated with the public transport team.

In the next six months we will be:

- a. Focusing on delivery of the schemes with investment funding agreed;
- b. Continuing to develop the pipeline of AT schemes for future funding;
- c. Locking in the new Design standards for AT.

- 3) **ENVIRONMENT AND NET ZERO:** Pre-pandemic the MCA declared a climate emergency. NZ work is being mainstreamed into policy agendas and a Project Director has been appointed. Major additional investment to tackle flooding has been secured– including catalytic use of MCA resources to get schemes underway. Working with the Environment Agency, the four local councils and major partners including Yorkshire Water, we've been developing a South Yorkshire approach to natural flood management. Additionally, the MCA has invested in the stunning Sheffield Grey-to-Green environmental regeneration initiative – proving that we can deliver sustainable flood measures, improve the economy and bring nature back into the heart of urban centres. The Mayor has also taken up the role of Vice Chairman of the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission, with MCA officers involved in supporting formulation of the YHCC Action Plan.

Further reinforcing mainstreaming of this agenda, OSC's recommendation that climate become a specific section on all board reports has been actioned.

In the next six months:

- a. the MCA will determine target spend per year for the next five years on decarbonisation measures – (eg. a £50m commitment as a low-end target);
- b. the MCA will determine the principle that decarbonisation efforts are integrated across all spending, and will be integrated as a key theme in allocation of the Renewal Fund;
- c. Additional Mayoral funding of £200,000 will unlock tree-planting across South Yorkshire, reinforcing measures being taken by South Yorkshire's local authorities;
- d. Groundbreaking Natural Capital Mapping work will feed through into the design of new interventions to enhance the region's natural capital assets;
- e. Engagement will continue with South Yorkshire Climate Alliance meetings and other stakeholders;
- f. the implications of the Government's new Environment Bill for the MCA and local authorities will become clear.

- 4) **SKILLS AND EDUCATION:** The MCA is now responsible for investing £42 million pa of devolved Adult Education Budget in provision for adults who live in our region. This has been a huge undertaking – working with colleges, training providers, local authorities and business to get the right provision in place. The MCA's aim in improving the delivery and effectiveness of AEB has been not only to focus on learners (rather than providers) but fundamentally to ensure the AEB chimes with the MCA's ambition to support people towards better quality, better paying jobs and gainful employment that offers longer term better prospects for people's lives.

In the next six months we will be:

- a. Making sure that AEB delivers;
- b. Finalising a new Skills Strategy and designing new programmes based on identified skills gaps;
- c. Working in partnership with Chambers of Commerce to align development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan trailblazer with work on our Skills Strategy, putting us in a better position to meet employer demands for skills and help residents find and progress in work.

- 5) **ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE:** ACH has been embedded as a key workstream for the MCA. A Project Director has been appointed and Mayoral Funding allocated to support the development of stronger networks, more capacity into the sector, and to develop up new capital and revenue projects.

In the next six months we will be:

- a. Managing the implementation of the £1 million fund, ringfenced to support the ACH sector;
- b. Embedding culture into the Investment Framework for the Renewal Fund;
- c. Delivering a new Cultural and Creative Industries network and mapping the creative industries across the region;
- d. Commissioning a thorough engagement process with the sector to contribute to a regional strategy.

- 6) **LEVELLING UP AND SECURING FURTHER RESOURCES TO DELIVER:** This has been, and remains, a constant theme for the Mayor and therefore the Executive Team. This has involved a programme of engagement with the Government that has sought to set out the potential that South Yorkshire has and the scale of investment required to unlock it. We have campaigned for changes to the Treasury Green Book and the MCA team have been part of the wider HMT team developing this new approach to investment.

The Mayor made a timely Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) submission into the Chancellor at the beginning of the October packaged under the SYMCA themes, a stronger South Yorkshire, a greener South Yorkshire, a fairer South Yorkshire. The Mayor continues to press government to commit to Levelling Up. We will see what South Yorkshire gets when the Chancellor stands up on the 27<sup>th</sup> October to deliver the autumn budget.

In the next six months we will be:

- a. Influencing the Spending Review and the Government's approach to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- b. Focusing on implementing the projects that fall out of the SR process and developing a new programme of work related to SPF (subject to the outcome of those two processes).

- 7) **SOUTH YORKSHIRE RENEWAL FUND:** Earlier this year, the MCA agreed the principle of a SY Renewal Fund (MCA Board March 21) drawing on the £30m pa resources secured through the Devolution Deal with government supplemented by prudent borrowing. Work is well underway developing the underpinning outcomes that will inform the Fund's deployment informed by the Strategic Economic Plan. The MCA will wish to take a view on how economic, social and environmental outcomes are hard wired into all interventions using the fund, as well as equity across the region

In the next six months the MCA will be:

- a. Agreeing a place-based outcomes framework that integrates organisation priorities such as net zero and inclusion. This will direct the types of projects and interventions designed and delivered locally alongside a set of South Yorkshire wide/MCA schemes that will deliver at a wider geography or at an appropriate scale to the challenge;
- b. Agreeing a policy mechanism for ensuring a return on MCA investment wherever possible and an associated Project Feasibility Fund;
- c. the detail of an investment programme for the new financial year.

## 8) ORGANISATION

- An organisation focused on delivery: South Yorkshire has its largest ever capital investment programme underway – totalling around £360m this year alone. We were one of the highest performing regions for the allocation of the £50m of additional business support for businesses affected by the Covid pandemic.
- Integration and rebranding: the Sheffield City Region has now rebranded to better reflect the area and people we serve, and the work that we do. We are now called the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and in line with this we are formally integrating the MCA and the PTE to create a single executive with strengthened political accountability.

SY MCA Executive

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