

**Mayoral Combined Authority Board**

**Tuesday, 09 January 2024**

**Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England**

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<b>Is the paper exempt from the press and public?</b>	No
<b>Reason why exempt:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Purpose of this report:</b>	Governance
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>Has it been included on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions?</b>	Not a Key Decision

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**Executive Summary**

This report outlines a proposal to in principle enter into a Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England. The fundamental purpose of the partnership is to attract further Government and private sector investment into South Yorkshire, build more homes and support place based regeneration.

**What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?**

Access to finance is a key building block for inclusive economic growth. Attracting greater investment will support existing businesses to thrive, encourage new businesses to locate in South Yorkshire and build more affordable homes in high quality places to address the region's needs.

**Recommendations**

Board are asked to:

1. Give in principle agreement to enter into a Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England.

2. Delegate authority to the Head of Paid Service, Section 73 and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Mayor and Leaders to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Homes England to establish a Strategic Place Partnership.

### **Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel**

None.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Homes England is the Government's housing and regeneration agency with the purpose of accelerating house building and regeneration across the country through a range of partnerships. It seeks to deliver affordable, quality homes in well-designed places that people are proud to live in.
- 1.2 Homes England, working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), is formalising its relationships with those MCA areas with strong ambition for housing and place based growth through the creation of Strategic Place Partnerships. Such partnerships have already been established with neighbouring MCAs as part of Devolution Deals with Government. They signal new ways of working and a move to a more collaborative and flexible solution focussed approach.
- 1.3 A Homes England Strategic Place Partnership would offer an opportunity to lever in further resources and investment into South Yorkshire to build more affordable high quality homes and support regeneration of our cities and towns; creating more sustainable places to also attract and lever in further private sector investment. This would form part of a suite of Place Partnerships the MCA Board will consider into the future, to attract growing levels of public and private investment across South Yorkshire.
- 1.4 This report requests approval to work up details and agree a Memorandum of Understanding with Homes England, including a Terms of Reference for a Partnership Board.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Memorandum of Understanding will be the initial stage in demonstrating commitment to work more closely with Homes England and DHLUC for the benefit of the region; building more homes and regenerating places to create better quality sustainable environments for people to live, work and spend their leisure time.
- 2.2 The Strategic Place Partnership (SPP) would oversee and steer the development of integrated and holistic area-based regeneration solutions and place-based housing growth: maximising and aligning Government and other funding, investment and support, whilst also strengthening the case for greater devolution of housing growth and regeneration powers and funding.
- 2.3 Further details will be developed, however in headline terms, a SPP would be governed by a SPP Board comprised of Homes England, Local Authority and Combined Authority partners alongside other key stakeholders from Government

departments and other bodies. The MCA Board will determine priority areas for investment as the decision making body. The SPP Board would be responsible for setting the strategic direction of the Partnership and providing a forum for liaison between the parties involved in the SPP.

- 2.4 The Board will not be decision making in terms of investments, as both the MCA and Homes England have current governance structures in place to ensure transparency of investment decisions. The SPP Board will act in an advisory capacity giving oversight to the strategic objectives and focus area activities of the SPP.
- 2.5 The MoU would seek to leverage the respective core competencies and capabilities of each party. Whilst the MoU would not commit either party to financial or contractual obligations, it would set out a commitment to ways of working between the parties to achieve success in delivering agreed housing and place based outcomes.
- 2.6 These outputs and outcomes for South Yorkshire could include: Levering in further Homes England and other Government resources and investment into the region;
- Accelerating the building of more affordable high quality homes;
  - Providing a Forum for developing and agreeing shared area-based intervention and investment approaches to grow and regenerate places;
  - Enabling the region to access a greater 'pool' of development and regeneration related skills and expertise from Homes England to accelerate schemes to development readiness and delivery.
  - Sharing development risk and presenting more commercial opportunities to lever in private sector investment and deliver more and better place outcomes.
  - Provide opportunities through a tried and tested approach to obtain greater influence over further Homes England and DHLUC investment programmes in South Yorkshire through future Devolution Deals.
- 2.7 The Strategic Place Partnership would not preclude Local Authorities continuing to have separate individual conversations with Homes England on housing and regeneration activities in local areas.

### 3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

#### 3.1 Option 1

To enter into an MoU with the Homes England to establish a Strategic Place Partnership.

#### 3.4 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

The MoU would not commit either party to financial or contractual obligations, nor does it preclude the MCA from entering into similar arrangements with other parties.

The MoU would commit the MCA to ways of working that will be of mutual benefit.

#### 3.5 Option 2

Reject the proposal to enter into an MoU with Homes England.

#### 3.8 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations

Rejecting the proposal would limit the Region's ability to access significant further resources and investment of Homes England to the dis-benefit of South Yorkshire.

### 3.13 **Recommended Option**

Option 1

## 4. **Consultation on Proposal**

4.1 **None.**

## 5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 The Head of Paid Service and Corporate Director for Growth, Business & Skills will implement the proposal following the Board's agreement. Delegations will be in line with those identified earlier in the report.

## 6. **Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice**

6.1 The MoU would not commit SYMCA to any financial obligation. The proposed commitment to ways of working would be largely resourced from existing officer time although further resources may be required to support the SPP arrangement.

6.2 Attracting greater private investment into the Region is critical to ensuring the efficient use of the limited amounts of public funding that is available to support economic growth. Having more and broader Homes England investment will enable SYMCA, Local Authorities and partners to be more targeted in how and when public interventions are deployed.

## 7. **Legal Implications and Advice**

7.1 SYMCA has powers and functions related to economic development in reliance on the general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011

## 8. **Human Resources Implications and Advice**

8.1 None.

## 9. **Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice**

9.1 None.

## 10. **Climate Change Implications and Advice**

10.1 The MoU would commit both parties to working together on housing investment opportunities, including environmental mitigations and adaptations.

## 11. **Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice**

11.1 None.

## 12. **Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice**

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12.1 Any publicity or other related communications will be agreed in writing by both parties prior to issue or release.

**List of Appendices Included:**

- 1 Key Principles and Options
- 2 Extract from GMCA Trailblazer (July 2023)