

## MCA - LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 1 JULY 2021 AT 11.00 AM

### MICROSOFT TEAMS

**Sheffield  
City Region**

**LOCAL ENTERPRISE  
PARTNERSHIP**

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#### Present:

James Muir (Chair)	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Nigel Brewster (Vice-Chair)	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Lucy Nickson (Vice-Chair)	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Alexa Greaves	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Professor Chris Husbands	Representative for Higher Education
Gemma Smith	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Neil MacDonald	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Karen Beardsley	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Peter Kennan	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Joe Chetcuti	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Bill Adams	TUC Representative
Professor Dave Petley	University of Sheffield
Michael Faulks	Co-opted Private Sector LEP Board Member
Dan Fell	Doncaster Chamber
Councillor Chris Read	Rotherham MBC
Mayor Ros Jones CBE	Doncaster MBC
Councillor Terry Fox	Sheffield City Council

#### Officers in Attendance:

Dr Dave Smith	Chief Executive	MCA Executive Team
Dr Ruth Adams	Deputy Chief Executive	MCA Executive Team
Martin Swales	Interim Director of Transport, Housing, Infrastructure and Planning	MCA Executive Team
Andy Gates	Assistant Director - Strategic Corporate Affairs	MCA Executive Team
Helen George	Assistant Director - Skills & Employment	MCA Executive Team
Jenny Holmes	Assistant Director for Strategic Transport	MCA Executive Team
Felix Kumi-Ampofo	Assistant Director Policy and Assurance	MCA Executive Team
Sue Sykes	Assistant Director - Programme and Performance Unit	MCA Executive Team
Daniel Wright	Head of Communications & Marketing	MCA Executive Team
Melanie McCool	Minute Taker	

#### Apologies:

Cathy Travers	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Richard Stubbs	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Mayor Dan Jarvis MBE	SCR Mayoral Combined Authority

1 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were noted.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

B Adams declared an interest in relation to the Mayoral Update, as the report made reference to the support for the Union Learning Fund.

There were no other declarations of interest.

3 **Notes of Last Meeting**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record.

4 **Questions from the Public**

None.

5 **Economy Presentation**

Members received a presentation from F Kumi-Ampofo regarding the South Yorkshire economy, which continued to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic. The full devastating impact and social effects of the pandemic were still unfolding. As South Yorkshire was not predominately reliant upon the hospitality and tourism sectors, it had been sheltered from the worst effects of the pandemic. However, it was considered that those individuals that had previously been disadvantaged or high at risk, were now likely to be in a much worse off position.

Members noted the increase in the number of jobs that had been posted in Barnsley over the past couple of months. The smaller towns had tended to increase the number of job postings being made due to the nature of the vacancies i.e. warehouse and distribution. With the exception of Sheffield, the number of people working from home in South Yorkshire was lower than the national average. The proportion of employed individuals within South Yorkshire that had been furloughed had been much lower in comparison to the national average. Data had indicated that the region was above the national average for unemployment at 5.4% in comparison to 4.6% for the UK. However, Barnsley almost matched the national rate for unemployment. There was a significant challenge regarding youth unemployment within the region. The majority of individuals that had been furloughed due to the pandemic were now returning back to employment. However, the Bank of England had predicated approximately 500,000 individuals would not have a job to return to, once the furlough scheme had concluded. The lowest paid individuals within

the economy were moving into new jobs and into new industries. Recruitment problems were being encountered within some sectors. Although there had been a decrease in the proportion of mid and low ranking jobs within the labour market pre-pandemic, this had been accelerated during the last year. A growth in demand had been encountered for the higher level skill occupations.

The pandemic had significantly impacted upon the number of people using public transport. The volume of traffic on the road network had either returned to pre-pandemic levels or was higher. Data had indicated that the emission levels had returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Members were referred to the people issues, which had been discussed as part of the Strategic Economic Plan. The challenges that had been highlighted from the data had remained and had been exacerbated by the pandemic. The data had indicated that individuals with special educational needs, free schools meals or living in deprived areas with low income levels had a much higher school absence rate. South Yorkshire had more areas of deprivation in comparison to the UK national average.

There had been an increase in the number of high street shop vacancies. However, the standalone sectors i.e. convenience stores and small shops within village high streets had improved. In comparison to the city centres, villages continued to hold a steady position in terms of the vacancy rates. Yorkshire and the Humber had the fifth lowest increase in terms of vacancy rates across the country.

Those businesses that had been able to move their processes and delivery onto an online platform had been able to adapt quicker and better to the pandemic. Focus would be given to support the smaller businesses to enable them to utilise e-commerce. The demand for real estate was expected to fall more over the coming years.

In 2020, the pandemic had driven a major economic disruption which had led to a 10% contraction within the UK economy, which had been the largest observed in the UK for 300 years.

Members noted the need for a greener economy by addressing the climate emergency. There was also a need for a fairer economy for those most at risk and disadvantaged i.e. younger people, lowest paid within the society, self-employed, hospitality, non-essential retail, women, parents with young children and ethnic minorities.

Data had indicated that Doncaster was the tenth highest place within the UK where people were most likely to be pushed into debt. Careful thought was required to provide support and interventions to those most in need of help.

J Muir commented that the priorities within the Strategic Economic Plan remained valid, and the submissions that had been made to last year's spending review and the Renewal Action Plan all contained and reflected the priorities, which would merit both scrutiny and action to the points raised within the presentation. He highlighted the need to give focus to the particular challenges to resolve the inequalities within the region that had been

exacerbated by the pandemic.

P Kennan queried where the limited resources for public transport should be targeted to point to the growth opportunities, and to what extent this was being fed into the Bus Improvement Plan.

F Kumi-Ampofo commented that it was too early to determine the position through the projections. He considered that even if there was a hybrid approach to remote working, this would lead to greater problems for the districts, towns and villages in terms of the urban centres. He suggested that the Board should consider the role faced by the key urban centres. It was noted that the transport decisions would need to be facilitated to accommodate that working trend. He suggested the need to pause, to ensure that the projections were the start of a trend. He was working with colleagues in relation to the Bus Improvement Plan.

J Muir commented that the projections were based upon extrapolations, to which the Board had an opportunity to make interventions.

In relation to the trends on emissions, Professor Husbands considered that the impact of the pandemic had a massive effect on the labour market and the emission levels were starting to return. He considered that securing both a greener and fairer recovery would be extra-ordinarily difficult to secure. He suggested the need to consider whether there was a requirement for further interventions on greener and fairer issues.

K Beardsley referred to the decline in the lower skilled jobs which had been accelerated as a result of the pandemic. She queried whether all of the interventions were in place to ensure that the 18 – 24 year olds acquired all of the relevant skills that were required by employers.

J Muir commented that the largest priority was to retrain and provide individuals with the correct skill sets. He made reference to a number of jobs that had been advertised within the SCR Team, one of which had been advertised three times due to not being able to acquire the correct skill set. There was a need to raise the skill sets to match the economic demand.

Councillor Read echoed the comments made. He considered that this was a very important piece of work for the LEP, to be clear of the interventions that could be made given the resources and influences of the Board, which over time could be matched with the economic reality. He requested that the matter be brought back to a future Board meeting.

J Muir considered that the issue should also be considered at the thematic board level. He suggested that the Board should look at the green agenda and the findings of the report presented today together with some of the initiatives that had been considered at the Business Growth Board, to consider other forms of green energy and how it could deliver a substantial reduction in CO<sup>2</sup> emissions. Members noted that some of the areas within South Yorkshire were amongst the sixth worst places of the UK pre-pandemic for air quality, together with a steel industry which contributed to over 20% of UK initiatives. He expressed his thanks to F Kumi-Ampofo for presentation given, and he wished

to discuss the matter with him further off line, with a view to the Board discussing the matter on a more frequent basis.

RESOLVED – That the Board discussed the key issues raised by the presentation and considered what actions may be necessary to grow an economy that worked for everyone.

## 6 **Report on Public Transport**

A report was submitted which provided an overview of the key opportunities and challenges facing public transport in South Yorkshire, together with the Government's public transport policies and funding streams to deliver improvements.

M Swales referred to the three broad policy issues and the context for public transport changes. There had been a number of public transport challenges in South Yorkshire pre-pandemic in relation to the commercial operation for the bus network, the tram system and awaiting the major announcements for trains with the Improving the Rail System (IRP). COVID-19 recovery was now a key policy context, which had impacted on the local patronage around bus and tram use and the funding received by the Government to provide support, together with the uncertainty for future funding. Members were referred to the levelling up growth agenda which had produced a number of funding opportunities, but was a politically challenging agenda regionally to ensure that the region was well represented in making its case for levelling up and to receive its funding and support.

Members noted the following key points:-

- The Government had announced the National Bus Strategy, with a requirement for a Bus Service Improvement Plan to be developed by autumn 2021. The Bus Review had highlighted the major financial infrastructure challenges faced around bus and tram.
- In relation to rail, the IRP was still awaited from the Government. There were a number of large impacts for South Yorkshire which included the Manchester Rail Recovery task force, which had been established post the 2018 challenges, with the system coming to a halt through the Manchester Interchange and its effect on South Yorkshire using the direct link to Manchester Airport.
- The details of the HS2 eastern leg were still awaited and would be included within the IRP, together with the significant potential leverage of growth opportunities for South Yorkshire and other parts of Yorkshire and the whole eastern leg.
- The tram concession would conclude in 2024, and a forward look was required to determine what the response would be together with the commercial considerations. Consideration was also required to the tram which was now reaching the end of its rolling stock.
- The Government Gear Change Strategy that had been announced in 2020 now faced a large emphasis on active travel. South Yorkshire had made a very strong commitment to active travel.
- The Levelling Up Fund had been quickly announced, and the MCA had submitted a bid for £50m in June 2021, which focused on improving the

- public transport passenger experience.
- Work was underway with the local authority partners to develop the South Yorkshire proposal for the Intra-City Transport Settlement (ICTS), to make a submission by the end of July 2021. However, the terms of reference guidance was awaited from the Government.

Professor Petley referred to the commitment for all vehicles to have zero emission by 2035. He queried the position in relation to the development of the charging infrastructure.

M Swales commented that the charging infrastructure was broken down into various areas i.e. how this could be undertaken for public transport and the limitations for technology, public charging and home charging. Consideration had been given for public transport and charging, which had formed part of the LUF bid and ICTS. M Swales' colleagues at the PTE were currently reviewing the Government's Zebra Fund. There were limitations to the bus capability in terms of electric vehicles; the layout of Sheffield still presented a number of challenges. Work was underway between the local authorities to ascertain what could be undertaken to provide support for the roll out and to make funding applications. A report had been presented to the last MCA meeting in relation to public charging infrastructure, where there would be a significant investment. It was hoped that this would be rolled out to each of the localised authorities as a standardised approach. Home charging was in its early stages of consideration and further work was required.

Councillor Fox referred to the pressures faced by SCC in relation to the tram, and he queried the opportunities through the ICTS funding. He referred to active travel, some of which had been implemented within Sheffield, and he suggested that consideration should be given to all of the options for opening this up and to consider the policy of the COVID-19 recovery.

D Fell referred to the long term catalogue of aspirations that were trying to be delivered. There was a need to make a case for public transport again within the communities of South Yorkshire. He queried whether there was a risk in trying to achieve this, and whether there were any emerging thoughts as to how this could be tackled to ensure that the demand was there.

M Swales commented that attempts would be made to exploit every opportunity in terms of the ICTS to support the public transport agenda. Discussions were underway between the local authorities regarding the future of tram investment, whilst giving consideration to the future of the tram and to sustain the current infrastructure. There was a need to push the active travel agenda whilst having the correct balance in terms of the economic recovery. It was anticipated that the Government would shortly publish the carbonisation agenda. A united position was being taken by P Kennan, the LEP Board, Leaders and Mayor Jarvis MBE to push and make the case for public transport investment, and to seek out and respond to every funding opportunity that was available. The PTE was undertaking a high volume of work in an attempt to gain the public's support to the public transport agenda.

P Kennan expressed his thanks to M Swales for presenting the report, and to the whole transport team for their diligence and commitment during this

challenging time. He requested an update in relation to the Bus Review and the integrated planning housing policy, which related to ensuring that the bus service was thought about during the decisions on future development, in particular when new employment sites were situated near high volume/frequency bus routes. In relation to the messages regarding the safety of public transport, he queried whether there was anything that could be undertaken more closely with the Directors of Public and Health and through the PTE to convey the message to all possible channels. He suggested that focus should be made to integrated smart ticketing, as a key area to increase the patronage of buses.

In terms of the integrated planning housing policy, M Swales referred to the work undertaken with colleagues across the MCA. He suggested that careful consideration should be given to contacting the Directors of Public Health, with a view to them supporting the messages regarding the safety of public transport. He added that Mayor Jarvis MBE and the Leaders had all requested consideration be given to the different ways in which the public within South Yorkshire could be encouraged to return back onto public transport.

B Adams appreciated the work being undertaken. He considered the need to be slightly more ambitious in what was envisaged to be achieved in Sheffield, whilst keeping a radical approach for public transport.

J Muir commented that the challenge for transportation in South Yorkshire was the level of car usage. He appreciated and observed the huge amounts of effort undertaken to optimise the different elements of the public transport system. However, he queried how this linked up to tackle the problem of car usage, the contributing factors and initiatives to achieve a reduction. He hoped that consideration would be given to hydrogen buses. He did not observe an overall umbrella to tackle the fundamental issue of reducing car usage.

M Swales referred to the need for short, medium and long term approaches to be applied. Some of the short term approaches had recently been flagged up by the local communities. Members were referred to the very planned and logical approach that would be considered politically, to determine what was the best option for South Yorkshire.

Mayor Jones CBE commented that this related to reliability and coverage of the public transport network. Doncaster had the largest hectare coverage in South Yorkshire, and therefore many people were unable to use public transport for the whole of their journey. She considered that the solutions addressed all of the points raised.

J Muir added that the level of investment that was requested was reliant upon Government funding. He expressed his thanks to M Swales, his team and P Kennan for all of their efforts. He hoped that public transport issues would be discussed at a future LEP Board meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That the Board discussed the current context for public transport planning and how public transport investment could contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Economic Plan.

## Skills Programmes

A report was presented which provided an update for the LEP Board across the range of the MCA skills and employment activity. The report reflected upon the discussion at the Education, Skills and Employability Board meeting held on 15 June 2021 and included a number of the decisions and actions that had been agreed at that meeting. An overview of the previous decisions and work that was already in train were provided within the report, together with updates on the two LEP programmes – Skills Bank and the South Yorkshire Careers and Enterprise Company Hub (formally Enterprise Advisor Network).

Councillor Read commented that he was happy with the recommendations outlined within the report. He requested an update on the South Yorkshire Jobs Fund, in terms of its development and a timeline as to when this may become operational.

H George referred to the small group that was being established to drive forward the South Yorkshire Jobs Fund programme and to provide strategic direction; the group would meet in July 2021. Soft market testing would shortly commence to establish how the payments could be made. Funding had been made available through the gainshare. It was envisaged that a pilot testing phase would be undertaken during autumn 2021, dependent upon the results of the soft market testing.

In relation to the economy presentation that was made at today's meeting, J Muir commented that many of the programmes had been created and implemented on the back of the RAP. He queried whether this was enough in terms of the scale of funding to address the skills issue.

H George considered that there was not enough funding. For example, Members noted the huge amount that could be undertaken for the apprenticeships through the gainshare funding and working with the apprenticeships levy. There was a need for a good robust strategy to be implemented.

J Muir queried whether the programmes should be undertaken on a much larger scale, or whether there was a need for supplementary programmes.

N Brewster commented that some of the employers could cease their training budgets, and therefore the Skills Bank was the most sensible option. Members noted the work underway to develop a task force approach to support redundancy and the development of the South Yorkshire Jobs Fund. The Skills Strategy would be developed to work both quickly and deliberately with a focus on the future. He expressed concern that this related to the education, skills and employability thematic area.

Members noted that the matter would be considered at the thematic board, and a more lengthy discussion would ensue at a future LEP Board meeting.

In relation to the South Yorkshire Job Fund, B Adams considered that it could be beneficial for the LEP Board to have an input onto the steering committee with the local authorities' employer representatives, in relation to influencing the

training and skills needs of businesses across South Yorkshire.

H George was happy for B Adams to sit on the SCR Skills Board for Redundancy.

J Muir gave thanks to H George for the presentation and the useful discussion, with a view to her coming back to a future LEP Board meeting.

RESOLVED – That the Board:-

- i) Noted the update on devolved Adult Education Budget commissioning.
- ii) Noted the proposals for the development of a South Yorkshire Skills Strategy.
- iii) Noted the update on Careers Advice and Guidance.
- iv) Approved the development of a full specification for the next iteration of Skills Bank based on the recommendations of the ESEB covering the principles, economic and social value outcomes and the operating model which were set out at Appendices C and D to the report.
- v) Noted the proposal for a Task and Finish Group to consider skills support for redundancy.
- vi) Noted the update on the proposed South Yorkshire Jobs Fund programme for those unemployed for 6 months.

## 8 **Rebranding and Name Change**

A report was submitted following the agreement made in principle at the MCA meeting held in January 2021 to the rebranding of the MCA which would reflect the organisation's core business and decision making that primarily affected South Yorkshire. At the MCA meeting held in June 2021, it had been agreed to rename the organisation to the 'South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority' and the office of Mayor's title to be changed to 'Mayor of South Yorkshire'. This would provide an opportunity for the MCA, LEP and MCA Executive to review its strategy and ambition to promote South Yorkshire to potential investors, talent and visitors.

Members received a presentation from D Wright, and the following points were noted:-

- Significant work was underway amongst the South Yorkshire local authorities to attract visitors and investment of talent to the region. One of the issues faced on a regional basis was that this had not been joined up or amplified and that it was partially incomplete. The challenge to be overcome was in relation to the specialisms, as there was not a true understanding of the people trying to be reached or their preconceptions of South Yorkshire.
- The brand needed to reach, influence and engage with a broad range of audiences i.e. residents of South Yorkshire, the business community and investors, students and skilled workers, Government ministers and policy makers.
- There was a requirement to develop a strategy which addressed the questions of why to live in South Yorkshire and why to invest in the region.
- Consideration would be given to developing the strategy to gather

audience insights, develop a complete and compelling narrative, to establish clear roles and responsibilities, build upon leadership and legitimacy, to amplify and support local identities, specialisms and success stories from across South Yorkshire.

- The role of the LEP would be to draw upon the expertise and networks which would inform the strategy development, to convene expertise and motivate coalition to promote the specialisms and success stories of the region, and to support the storytelling and amplification of South Yorkshire.

G Smith commented that she was fully supportive of the report. She considered that the region had many strengths, however there was a need to raise awareness. She considered that it was very important that an independent review should be undertaken to assist with the audience insight together with a 360° view to speak to the internal Leaders. She suggested that consideration should be given to who would own the branding moving forwards. She queried whether consideration should be given to the Place Board which had been embraced by other areas. She was happy to provide assistance in relation to the rebranding.

D Wright welcomed G Smith's expertise and assistance in relation to the rebranding. In relation to the ownership of the brand, he considered that this was an open question which would be brought back to the Board. He agreed to the suggestion of an independent review of the audience insight and a 360° view.

J Chetcuti commented that the independent review of the audience insight was the foundation to ensure that the branding was correct for the region. As the region was so diverse and the range of different audiences, he queried the measures to be taken to ensure that the South Yorkshire stories reflected the needs of the different audiences for the region.

D Wright highlighted the need for the development of a framework which could be worked towards, which would be developed in more detail with different messages to be carried to those different audience groups.

RESOLVED – That the Board:-

- i) Provided feedback on a possible approach to developing a place brand to promote the region's interests.
- ii) Nominated a Member to support the brand development work with the MCA Executive.
- iii) Provided views on the scope of audience insight and research to develop the strategy.

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## **Welcome to Yorkshire Campaign**

A report was presented in relation to the Welcome to Yorkshire Campaign (WTY). In order to deliver the manifesto commitment of Mayor Jarvis MBE, to promote South Yorkshire's visitor economy and in support of a sector hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, the MCA Executive was working with WTY and the four South Yorkshire councils on the re-opening of the visitor economy campaign. This would help to promote the region's urban centres, major

attractions, and cultural and heritage offer to domestic and regional visitors.

The MCA/LEP had engaged with WTY in late summer 2020 to develop a campaign which would support the reopening of the economy, with focus given to the visitor destinations around South Yorkshire. The WTY campaign, which had been delayed due to the pandemic, would be launched w/c 5 July 2021.

Major Jones CBE commented that she was the SCR representative on the Welcome to Yorkshire Board, and therefore she would not take part in the discussion.

Discussions were underway with J Muir, his fellow LEP Chairs within Yorkshire and WTY to ensure that WTY had re-evaluated their role to fit more closely with the LEP agendas and to ensure that there was not an assumption for WTY to promote themselves as a Yorkshire tourist board. It was incumbent for WTY to come back with a stronger rationale as to why the LEPs would collaborate with WTY, and to ensure that measures had been implemented to enable the LEPs to work with WTY in a manner which would benefit South Yorkshire and not disproportionately elsewhere.

N MacDonald commented that J Mason, Chief Executive of WTY had talked with the private sector members on WTY. The private sector members had welcomed the work to be undertaken, whilst acknowledging the volume of work to enable the private sector members to feel included, as previously WTY had been very Leeds and North Yorkshire bias.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the content of the report and indicated their interest in supporting and engaging on programmes such as this in future meetings.

## 10 **Business Development Pipeline**

A report was submitted which recommended a selection of three identified schemes onto the pipeline in order that Business Cases may be developed. The schemes which related to existing companies based in South Yorkshire which sought to grow, collectively offered the potential for 200 new jobs, leveraging private sector investment of over £100m. A total cumulative investment of £11.6m was sought, at an average cost of £67k per job. Two of the proposed schemes were within the cultural and digital sector and the third scheme was an Advanced Manufacturing proposition. The ongoing programme of engagement with businesses had been led by the LEP Chair.

S Sykes commented that at this early stage, all three of the proposed schemes appeared to be well aligned to the desire to support the creation of well-paid jobs. In order to secure the funding, the proposals would need to be taken through the MCA's assurance processes together with the identification of a funding source. In the event that the businesses were accepted onto the pipeline, it was anticipated that full business cases would be submitted within the current financial year.

Members noted that to date, a pipeline of propositions had been developed worth £132m from 27 businesses, with no source of funding currently available.

It had been stated at the recent SCR Business Recovery and Growth Board to begin to consider ways to enable the pipeline to be prioritised.

N MacDonald was supportive of the continuation of the pipeline process.

RESOLVED – That the Board accepted the schemes detailed within Appendix A to the report to the programme pipeline, noting that projects would only be supported if future funding was received and assurance requirements were met.

## 11 **Annual Report 2020/21 and Delivery Plan 2021/22**

A report was presented to seek approval of the LEP Annual Report (2020-21) and Delivery Plan (2021-22) which had been combined into a single publication. The Annual Report outlined what the LEP had delivered in the past year for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire, together with a summary of what was aimed to be delivered in the coming year.

Members noted that 2020/21 had been the Local Growth Fund's (LGF) final funded year. For every £1 of LGF investment made into the economy there would be a further £2.35 of match funding generated for the economy. A total of £24 for every £1 invested had been returned from the LGF programme to date. Once all of the outputs had been achieved, it was predicated that this would return to £67 for every £1 of LGF invested.

P Kennan considered that the highlights section of the report was in fact statements of the work undertaken. He suggested that the highlights section should refer to more positive issues i.e. to deliver an improved train service to London as result of the efforts made over the last 3 years through the LEP, MCA, PTE and other private sector bodies, together with the work underway on parts of the Northern Powerhouse Rail to benefit Rotherham and Barnsley Dearne Valley.

A Gates agreed with the comments made by P Kennan.

RESOLVED – That Members endorsed the content of the LEP Annual Report (2020-21) and Delivery Plan (2021-22) and provided feedback where required.

## 12 **Mayoral Update**

A report was submitted which provided Members with an update on key Mayoral activity relating to the economic agenda.

Updates were provided on:-

- The COVID-19 pandemic.
- Plan for the North.
- A greener South Yorkshire: Investing in our bus network.
- A fairer South Yorkshire: The launch of the Ownership Hub.
- A stronger South Yorkshire: Continuing the workers' training programme.

On behalf of Mayor Jarvis MBE, Dr Smith highlighted the rapid increase in the

number of COVID-19 cases within South Yorkshire as a consequence of the new variant, although this had not led to increased hospitalisations. The increase in the number of new cases had particularly been encountered amongst young people but at present, this had not created a crisis within the National Health Service.

Dr Smith referred to the work undertaken by Mayor Jarvis MBE and others in making the case for levelling up through the Plan for the North. Members noted the great deal of activity underway on a number of spheres in the north of England regarding how to influence the Government's levelling up agenda. A White Paper was anticipated to be released in autumn 2021. Similar discussions were being undertaken at the NP11 Group regarding how to influence and assist the Government to understand the needs of the north of England.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

### 13 **Chief Executive's Update**

A report was presented which provided Members with a general update on activity being undertaken by the LEP outside of the agenda items under discussion.

Updates were provided on:-

- Levelling up Fund.
- Community Renewal Fund bid.
- Adult Education Budget.
- Business Advisory Group.

Dr Smith highlighted the importance for the continuation of the Business Advisory Group, and to continue to encourage to facilitate a business network which supported and informed the agenda and the actions taken as an Executive.

J Muir expressed his thanks to Dr Smith and his team for the preparatory work undertaken in the reports presented at today's meeting. In relation to the Annual Report and Delivery Plan, he commented that this reflected the collaborative framework and the achievements that had been made, despite the hardships and challenges that were faced. He took the opportunity to thank everyone present at the meeting for all of the work undertaken and the strong sense of collaboration as the LEP Board, which had also been achieved through the agreement made between the Leaders for a collaborative devolution framework in 2020.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

I, the undersigned, confirm that this is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signed

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Name .....

Position .....

Date .....