

MCA - LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON:

THURSDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 11.00 AM

VIRTUALLY

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE
BUSINESS**



**LOCAL
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP**

Present:

James Muir (Chair)	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Gemma Smith	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Neil MacDonald	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Angela Foulkes	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Peter Kennan	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Richard Stubbs	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
Mayor Dan Jarvis MBE	SCR Mayoral Combined Authority
Mayor Ros Jones CBE	Doncaster MBC
Dr Dave Smith	MCA Executive Team
Helen Kemp	MCA Executive Team
Martin Swales	MCA Executive Team
Nici Pickering	MCA Executive Team

In Attendance:

Councillor Julie Grocutt	Sheffield CC
Paul Johnson	MCA Executive Team
Justin Homer	BEIS
Sam Pollard	BEIS
Christian Foster	Doncaster MBC
Eugene Walker	Sheffield CC
Mark Harrop	Guest

Apologies:

Nigel Brewster	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Alexa Greaves	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Professor Chris Husbands	Representative for Higher Education
Karen Beardsley	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Cathy Travers	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Tanwer Khan	Private Sector LEP Board Member
Dan Fell	Doncaster Chamber
Councillor Chris Read	Rotherham MBC
Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE	Barnsley MBC
Dr Ruth Adams	MCA Executive Team
Sharon Kemp	Rotherham MBC

Kate Josephs
Damian Allen
Sarah Norman

Sheffield CC
Doncaster MBC
Barnsley MBC

1 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He welcomed Sam Pollard from BEIS, who would be attending the meeting in an observer capacity.

Apologies for absence were noted as above. C Marriott confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

In relation to agenda item 6 entitled 'South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy' Councillor Grocutt declared a personal interest, as her son worked for Virgin Media.

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any activity since the last formal Board meeting.

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any forthcoming activity.

3 **Notes of last meeting**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 1 July 2021 were agreed to be an accurate record.

4 **Inclusion Plan for South Yorkshire**

A report was presented which provided an update on the development of the South Yorkshire Inclusion Plan, together with progress notes on the Employer Contract and Progressive Procurement themes. The MCA and LEP had adopted inclusion within the SEP, which was one of the three pillars of the policy objectives that outlined the plan for stronger, greener and fairer economic growth. At the Board meeting held in May 2021, Members had agreed the approach and parameters for the Inclusion Plan.

Development of the South Yorkshire Inclusion Plan had continued during the summer period. Following an engagement phase with the LEP Board Members, it was envisaged that a substantive progress report would be presented to the next Board meeting.

Members noted the progress that had been made in relation to the key themes of employer contract, progressive procurement policy, health and wellbeing, and inclusive innovation. It was noted that most of the progress had been made in relation to the employer contract and the progressive procurement policy. It was envisaged that once the employer contract had been agreed, that this would guide the manner in which the work was undertaken with all of the organisations, in particular the private sector business that the MCA and LEP undertook business with.

The Board Members had been invited to attend a workshop which would be held during w/c 13 September 2021 which would enable further engagement on the Inclusion Plan. Following which, the matter would be discussed with business leaders at the SCR Business Recovery Group, business representative groups and others. Work was currently underway with an external affairs team to select a cross section of businesses and business leaders to undertake detailed sessions, and to report back to the Board.

Since the last Board meeting engagement had been made with the LEP Board Members, local authority officers, universities, third sector partners and businesses, and bids had recently been received to commission a piece of work around the health assets review. It was envisaged that an appointment would shortly be made, with a view to the work commencing in the upcoming week or so. This would enable the health and wellbeing theme to develop quickly. In relation to inclusive innovation, the policy paper had been drafted and further work would be undertaken. The Board would be provided with an update in due course.

R Stubbs requested a further understanding in relation to employee engagement. He sought clarity around the health and wellbeing objective, which he considered that the key areas were for a better delivery of the health care services, recognising that most of this would be derived from outside of the control of the NHS, and how to grow the health and life sciences supply chain centre within the region. He considered that the work that was articulated within the SEP related to growing the economic centre as a key anchor for the employers within the region. He requested a consistent use of terminology.

In response, F Kumi-Ampofo referred to the paper that was currently being developed and to agree the role of the MCA across the key areas as outlined by R Stubbs. In relation to the SEP, the health sector and the business of health would be engaged in innovative activity. The commission that had been made for work around the health assets review would enable a better understanding together with the potential for growth. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the fact that there would not be an economy without a healthy population. The MCA and the LEP would work with partners in order to close the health outcomes gaps that currently existed which linked into the economic outcomes that fell within their remit.

J Muir considered that it would be helpful to include R Stubbs in the future discussion, in particular in relation to the health and wellbeing agenda.

B Adams expressed his thanks to F Kumi-Ampofo and his team for the comprehensive report. The Inclusion Agenda, which formed part of the rationale from the SEP, would attempt to make the economy fairer and improve the lives around the region.

J Muir referred to the necessity to establish a framework that pointed towards good employer practice. It was noted that those companies that engaged with employee participation in seeking to steer the company were usually the most productive and profitable. The MCA had pioneered a number of initiatives within the region, and the employee contract was well advanced. He was

confident that through the process that had been agreed, that matters would progress onto the consultative stage. He considered that the health and wellbeing theme required the most discussion moving forwards. He wished to encourage a debate on the innovation side to involve collaboration between the public and private sectors, the anchor institutions and the universities to ensure that the Inclusion Strategy was inclusive geographically.

Members noted the necessity to ascertain a mechanism to ensure that Doncaster and Barnsley benefited on a place basis for investments for innovation that led to industrialisation, commercialisation and job growth.

Mayor Jarvis MBE considered that this was a very important piece of work given the long standing inequalities within South Yorkshire that had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. He welcomed the focus of the LEP Board on the matter, and he looked forward to a progress update being provided to the LEP Board meeting that was scheduled to be held in November 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Board:-

i) Considered the progress made to date.

Agreed to lead the engagement phase of the Employer Contract theme (and the Inclusive Innovation theme later).

5 **Mayoral Update**

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

Updates were provided on:-

- The Comprehensive Spending Review, Integrated Rail Plan and Levelling Up.
- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Bid.
- Local skills support for South Yorkshire's Learners.
- South Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Mayoral Community Fund.

On behalf of the Board, Mayor Jarvis MBE wished to extend his warmest congratulations to Dame Sarah Storey, SCR's Active Travel Commissioner who had recently become Britain's most successful Paralympic athlete in both swimming and cycling. Dame Storey continued to undertake extremely important work for South Yorkshire in promoting the active travel agenda. It was envisaged to hold a physical event to mark Dame Storey's recent success. The LEP Board Members would be invited to the event.

Over the upcoming couple of weeks, Mayor Jarvis MBE would focus upon re-engaging with the Government on the levelling up agenda. He considered that the Comprehensive Spending Review at the end of October 2021 would be a critical point for the Government to demonstrate and evidence their practical commitment to the levelling up agenda by investing in the regions and the mayoral combined authorities. He expressed concern that the details of the

Integrated Rail Plan were still unavailable. However, he would continue to make the case to Government to publish the Integrated Rail Plan, which was critically important in relation to transport infrastructure which had the potential to significantly benefit the regional economies.

The Board noted the importance of the work underway for the SCR Sustainable Transport Settlement Bid, and the huge effort made by the SCR team and all of the local authorities to draw together the bid, which would be submitted to the Department for Transport on 15 September 2021.

It was anticipated that the Government would confirm the outcome of the previously submitted levelling up fund bid during the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review. Mayor Jarvis MBE had a debate scheduled in Parliament later in the week, which would specifically relate to the levelling up agenda, which would be responded to by the Treasury. Members noted that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government faced massive fiscal pressures.

A discussion had recently been held with Mayor Jarvis MBE, Dr Smith and others with Neil O'Brien, who had been charged by the Prime Minister to take forward the levelling up agenda. The SCR was currently drawing up a Comprehensive Spending Review proposal to highlight the key areas for investment.

In relation to the Comprehensive Spending Review, P Kennan suggested that the Board should undertake a joint communication with Mayor Jarvis MBE over the upcoming few weeks, in order to push the business case alongside the political case.

J Muir agreed to P Kennan's suggestion, however he suggested that it should relate to supporting the input into the Comprehensive Spending Review and to ensure that there was a collective voice. He was happy to engage further with P Kennan on the matter. He requested Dr Smith to liaise with Mayor Jarvis MBE on the matter, with a view to reporting back to the Board on the actions that had been taken in relation to the communications.

Mayor Jarvis MBE was confident that the SCR product submitted to the Government would be strong, however he highlighted the need for a common strategy. The Comprehensive Spending Review was pivotal to the SCR which would set out the Government's investment plans for the next 3 years.

Dr Smith suggested that this should be considered as a campaign, rather than as a one off set of statements. He did not consider that the individual submissions to the Treasury by the end of September 2021 would make a great impact on the fiscal position. He considered that the larger opportunity for the SCR was to attempt to influence the outcome of the CSR in terms of the Government's own policies for levelling up, the transport forums and the UK share prosperity fund, which would lead to funding for levelling up and the associated innovation strategy material which would be reflected within the CSO.

J Muir welcomed the engagement of Mayor Jarvis MBE with the MP's on the

matter. He considered that the private sector Board Members could undertake further engagement, which could essentially enable the Board to reach all of the MP's within South Yorkshire. He suggested that Mayor Jarvis MBE, Dr Smith and himself could consider targeting specific individuals, in order to push the agenda.

J Muir expressed his thanks to Mayor Jarvis MBE for his presentation.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

6 **Government Innovation Strategy**

A report was submitted in relation to the Government Innovation Strategy which had been launched at the AMRC in July 2021, and had replaced the Industrial Strategy. The Innovation Strategy had a clear and strong link to the SEP, which cemented the LEP's strategic alignment with the Government on innovation. Outlined within the Innovation Strategy were plans to cement the UK's position as a world-leader in science, research and innovation, with a long term plan to boost private sector investment across the UK. The long term vision was make the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035.

Members were referred to the three main areas for the emerging South Yorkshire innovation approach:-

- To create the enabling conditions for innovation driven growth – R&D, clustering, ecosystems, technology deployment within business, business to business activity, and catapults etc.
- To conversion/realising the economic benefit locally and inclusively.
- The clarity, persuasiveness and credibility of the South Yorkshire story and experience.

The report set out three broad options:-

- Option 1. To do nothing - adopt a passive approach, and to wait and see if there was a role for the LEP's.
- Option 2. To do something – within the context of developing delivery plans for the SEP.
- Option 3. To do more – same as Option 2, but also to mount a lobbying campaign to seek to be a commissioning/investment partner with Government, especially to areas with clear links i.e. Advanced Materials and Manufacturing.

The matter had been discussed with the Co-Chairs and the SCR Business Recovery and Growth Board. At that meeting, Members had not considered it appropriate to adopt a passive approach. They had also agreed that a focused innovation board should be established to enable South Yorkshire to become a leader in innovation, and that it would be necessary to know which schemes were available for potential funding.

P Kennan referred to a recent discussion with other private sector Board Members who had shown a great deal of support for Option 3. He hoped that the Leaders and officers had observed the enthusiasm, with a view to devoting

financial resource to appoint external consultants, if it was not possible to undertake everything in-house, and to embrace Option 3.

Mayor Jones CBE commented that most of the work was undertaken within the local authorities and that the MCA would pull together the bids. She considered that there was a need to lobby the Government for an appropriate method in which they notified of potential funding. She also considered that there should be lobbying in the medium and long term, in order to achieve proper schemes that could be delivered appropriately for the area.

P Kennan was aware of the pressures that were faced by the officers at DMBC, and he considered that resourcing was a problem across all of the local authorities. He hoped that resourcing could be found to deal with the issue under Option 3.

In relation to the work undertaken by the MCA Officers on the South Yorkshire branding and the stories, J Chetcuti suggested that it would be helpful to ensure that the work undertaken within one section of the MCA was fed into the other areas. He also suggested that objectives should be set to ensure that everyone agreed the content of the stories.

J Muir suggested that the Board should endorse Option 3, as highlighted within the report. There was a need to establish a way for greater focus on what drives innovation at the source. There was a clear deficit within the UK PLC which needed to be addressed, and collaboration of the two education institutions was required to provide support. He considered that the largest issue to be addressed, which could be achieved uniquely within South Yorkshire or to take a leading stance, was to determine how to bring collaboration between the private sector, public sector and the academic sector. It would be necessary for South Yorkshire to stand out as a centre of excellence and a source of innovation in specific areas, and to align those priorities with the ambitions of the anchor institutions in terms of the competencies that they had and those that were need to enable them to grow. Therefore he considered that the MCA, which had financial resources at its disposal, should be prepared to invest a proportion of funding into innovation projects which translated into industrialised and job creation. This would present an opportunity to deal with the Government in terms of co-funding on the public sector side, which would enable leverage of the private sector. He anticipated that there would be a need for resource focus to specifically drive the innovation forward.

A further conversation would be held between Mayor Jones CBE and N MacDonald in relation to the context of business growth.

RESOLVED – That the Board:-

- i) Reviewed the summary of the Government's Innovation Strategy.
- ii) Considered the emerging approach on innovation, provided a steer, and set out what role it would play within this.

Considered how it could galvanise activity to deliver more innovative start-ups,

scale-ups and clusters.

7

South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy

A report was submitted which presented the draft South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy. In 2020, the consultant Arcadis had been commissioned to provide support to the MCA/LEP and partners to prepare a South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy. The SCR Housing and Infrastructure Board had developed the Final Draft Strategy and had recommended its approval, with a lead input provided by the Board's Co-Chair LEP representative.

The Board noted the three areas within the SEP which identified the digital targets and ambitions i.e. digital infrastructure, digital skills, innovation and business support. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the importance of having a strong digital connectivity for businesses and communities. Poor connectivity within communities had impacted upon access to training, education and job opportunities. As part of the process, engagement had been made with many different private sector Board Members, to ensure that the needs of all different types of businesses were addressed moving forwards.

The South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy sought to address the following key challenges:-

- Over the next 5 year period, a total of 160,000 premises within South Yorkshire had not been scheduled to receive 'gigabit-capable' broadband by the industry.
- A gigabit broadband connectivity would be rolled out throughout South Yorkshire, to build upon the success of the Superfast South Yorkshire broadband programme.
- To ensure that local businesses were aware of and to exploit the 5G opportunities, and to ensure a more consistent regional approach.
- To address the affordability and digital poverty of broadband services.

The Board was provided with a short presentation on the Digital Infrastructure Strategy. Members noted the following key points:-

- The vision to provide a gigabit digital infrastructure that accelerated new social and economic possibilities for all of the people and businesses of South Yorkshire.
- To ensure that the superfast broadband and 4G success of South Yorkshire was repeated for gigabit broadband and 5G.
- To support the social and economic priorities as set out within the SEP.
- To create an inclusive platform that would enable better outcomes for all sections of society.
- To take a governance and data driven approach in order to maximise the digital potential of South Yorkshire.
- Ensure that South Yorkshire was positioned as a centre of applied digital innovation.

The SCR Housing and Infrastructure Board would discuss the delivery of the Digital Infrastructure Strategy at their next meeting in October 2021.

In response to a question received from Professor Petley, C Blackburn commented that the Digital Infrastructure Strategy would cover the next 5 years, with the potential to cover up to the next 10 year period. It was considered that the policies within the Digital Infrastructure Strategy would still be relevant in several years' time.

Dr Smith expressed his thanks to G Smith and the SCR Housing and Infrastructure Board for the work undertaken. The MCA Members were keen to understand the delivery of the Digital Infrastructure Strategy, whilst ensuring smart implementation and to recognise that a great deal of the agenda would be delivered by the market.

M Faulks applauded the efforts that had been made, although he expressed concern that matters had not progressed quickly enough. He considered that in order to achieve what was required in terms of the SEP for growth and innovation that the Digital Infrastructure Strategy should be at the foundation. He encouraged Members to fully support the Digital Infrastructure Strategy.

J Muir considered that coherence was missing across a number of different areas that related to digital. It was noted that the market appetite would increase if there was a specific and dedicated skills strategy with a developing skills set. The SCR would provide advice and consultation to local businesses, in order to improve their digital understanding and to build upon their digital capability.

J Muir suggested that the matter should be considered further at a future Board meeting, with a view to revisiting the infrastructure. Dr Smith agreed to the suggestion. J Muir requested M Faulks, J Chetcuti, G Smith, A Foulkes and Professor Petley to create a potential forum to discuss matters further.

RESOLVED – That the Board considered and endorsed the draft South Yorkshire Digital Infrastructure Strategy.

8 **Business Recovery and Growth Board Summary Paper**

A report was submitted which provided an update across the range of activity delivered under the direction and oversight of the SCR Business Recovery and Growth Board.

Members received an update in relation to the delivery and progress of the following Renewal Action Plan priorities:-

- Priority 1 – A Relief Fund, providing financial support to businesses.

Business Advisors had been embedded within the four local authorities with the remit to ensure that businesses were supported in accessing the grants. A capital scheme had been established to encourage businesses to consider productivity which would enable them to thrive beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 642 jobs were anticipated to be created across South Yorkshire. Evaluation was underway with a view to reporting back to the Board on future activity.

- Priority 2 – Extending regional access to advisory and specialist support.

Engagement had been made with a total of 400 businesses across South Yorkshire, 270 of which were micro businesses and 130 businesses were small to medium sized enterprises and large companies.

- Priority 3 – Access to digital adoption and upskilling support.

It was intended to present a soft-landing programme to the next Board meeting.

- Priority 4 – Supply development support.

Supply Chain Advisors had been appointed within three of the local authority teams, with a view to appointing a Supply Chain Advisor within SCC.

Sheffield University students had undertaken a supply chain mapping exercise. Analysis would be provided to the Board in due course.

- Priority 5 – Marketing activity – positive messaging and comms on initiatives.

A great deal of marketing activity had been undertaken around the positive messages with businesses, to include promoting events with stakeholders and partners.

Members noted that the Peer Networks contract had been awarded the Winning Pitch, to deliver eight cohorts of peer network support to SME's within South Yorkshire.

The Board had previously discussed the business pipeline and the projects that were being delivered at pace. The first two approvals would be presented to the MCA meeting that was scheduled to be held in September 2021. International activity had been effected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A Virtual Trade Mission had been held during April 2021, where a total of 47 Growth Champions meetings had been held. It was anticipated that the South Yorkshire India Advisory Board meeting would be held in November 2021. A South Yorkshire China Advisory Board would be developed, but this had been postponed due to the pandemic.

J Muir expressed his thanks to H Kemp and her team, N MacDonald and Mayor Jones CBE for their efforts and time involved in holding a series of SCR Business Recovery and Growth Board Meetings to support a number of initiatives.

N MacDonald also expressed his thanks to H Kemp and her team for the work undertaken. In relation to the employment contracts, he commented that the projects had been discussed at the Assurance Panel and the SCR Business Recovery and Growth Board, and communication had been made with those companies.

RESOLVED – That the Board noted the activity to date on delivering the Employer section of the Renewal Action Plan and the developments in business support and international activity.

9 **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:-

- Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund.
- MADE Smarter Review.
- Quarterly Economic Survey (QES).
- Support for the LEP Review.
- South Yorkshire Music Board.
- Business Advisory Group.

In relation to the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund, Dr Smith expressed his thanks to N MacDonald who represented the LEP on the NPIF Strategic Oversight Board.

J Muir and P Kennan commented that they would be interested to receive the results of the Quarterly Economic Survey, which had included questions regarding cyber-crime and other topical items.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the update.

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

Signed

Name

Position

Date