

Councillor Terry Fox
Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE
Councillor Chris Read
Kate Josephs
Sharon Kemp
Sarah Norman

Sheffield City Council
Barnsley MBC
Rotherham MBC
Sheffield City Council
Rotherham MBC
Barnsley MBC

49 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were noted as above.

Professor Kevin Kerrigan and Professor Koen Lamberts were welcomed to the Board.

The Board noted that this was the SYMCA Deputy Chief Executive's final meeting and thanked her for all of her work at the MCA.

50 **Declarations of Interest**

Professor Kevin Kerrigan declared an interest that his employer, Sheffield Hallam University, was a provider of skills services which fall within the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Mayor Ros Jones declared an interest in any activity relating specifically to Doncaster.

51 **Notes of Last Meeting**

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting held on 8 September 2022 be agreed as a true record, with the amendment that apologies were received from Bill Adams.

52 **The South Yorkshire Economy - Presentation**

A report on the South Yorkshire Economy was presented which highlighted the following:

- There had been no change to business density and healthy life expectancy since the previous LEP Board meeting
- There had been changes in Government policies following the recent change in Prime Ministers. The Energy Price Guarantee, reduced National Insurance and Investment Zones were still expected to go ahead
- South Yorkshire was more exposed to fuel poverty than the national average due to the structure of the economy and the presence of several energy-intensive users
- The cost of most household goods had increased since the previous meeting
- The Bank of England was due to announce an increase in interest rates
- Unemployment levels were very low, with the employment rate staying

- above 70%, and job vacancies were at a record high
- The skills profiles of jobseekers in South Yorkshire were largely not aligned with the skills being sought by employers. For example, warehousing skills were highly sought by employers, but not high amongst jobseeker profiles in the region
- Public Transport was seeing the highest levels of patronage since the pandemic. The increase in working from home was noted, and the Board considered that indicators other than high patronage could be measured in future
- High interest rates were positive for savers and investors
- House prices were expected to start falling
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the north had increased by 72%
- Wholesale gas prices had started to fall and this is projected to continue into Spring 2023

It was raised that though unemployment was low, there was a growing number of employed people who had to rely on in-work benefits due to low pay.

It was noted that the Chambers Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) could more fully incorporated into future economy updates at the Board. A summary slide on the QES was presented to the board as part pf this update.

RESOLVED: To note the update and agreed to receive it as a standing item on all LEP agendas.

53

New Government Update

A verbal update was provided on engagement with the new government.

An overview was given of the new Cabinet Leads:

- Gillian Keegan, Education Minister, was the first Education Minister from an Apprenticeships background
- Grant Shapps, Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Minister, had expressed that clean energy was a priority for this Government
- Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, looked to be continuing with the Levelling Up agenda
- There was more opportunity for the MCA to work with Mel Stride, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, due to the market challenges in South Yorkshire mentioned earlier in the meeting

The following messages were becoming clear from Government:

- The Autumn Budget would likely involve increased taxes and cuts to public spending
- Increasing technical and vocational qualifications would be a priority
- Devolution would continue across regions

The potential impacts on South Yorkshire were outlined:

- Revenue for public transport would be constrained
- The energy crisis would have a greater impact on manufacturing industry in the region

- Government ambition to create new international trade deals would align with the MCA's ambition for an International Strategy
- The Mayor's manifesto commitment to Healthy Life Expectancy also aligned with Government policies around health

The Board welcomed an International Strategy for the MCA, and noted that at present there was not a clear message of what South Yorkshire's international activity was, nor what its offer was to international investors.

It was asked whether there was a plan for building a network of contacts at the LEP and MCA, so that new policy issues could be addressed efficiently, and further devolution secured for the region.

It was noted that there was no clear message on immigration coming from government, and that different types of immigration impacted on the region in different ways, for example the impact of international students is different to asylum seekers.

RESOLVED: To note the update and agreed to receive it as a standing item on all future LEP agendas.

54 **Doncaster Sheffield Airport Update**

A verbal update was provided on Doncaster Sheffield Airport, noting that:

- There was still ongoing uncertainty around its proposed closure, and a collective campaign was ongoing across the region to save the airport
- Work was ongoing to support airport employees in finding alternative careers
- Negotiations were ongoing with a party interested in buying the airport, but Peel were resistant to sell
- An Injunctive Action had been filed for, which sought to prevent any degradation of the site and facilities which may prevent use of the site as an airport in the future
- The support of the business community on the issue had been very welcome

RESOLVED: To note the update.

55 **Cost of Living Response**

A report on the MCA's Cost of Living Response was presented to the Board, which noted that the MCA Board had approved £2m which had been used to cap bus fares in the region to £2 for a single journey, and towards food security initiatives.

It was noted that this was a new remit for the MCA, and long-term schemes were being investigated alongside Local Authorities and external partners via a series of workshops. Input from the LEP Board was welcomed on this.

The Board welcomed this work and expressed a desire to align all local initiatives and offers, for example the hardship funds put in place for students at the Universities, or cost-of-living easements being made by companies in the

region.

The Board suggested setting up a package of support and advice for local businesses on how to reduce costs during the cost-of-living crisis, such as reducing energy usage or where to access financial support.

It was raised that more immediate action to increase patronage on public transport would be welcomed.

RESOLVED: To note the interventions approved at the October MCA Board.

56

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Implementation

A report on the implementation of the UKSPF was presented to the Board. It noted that:

- The total fund was worth less than previous European funding
- There had been a short window to develop an investment plan. This was submitted to Government in August 2022 and the MCA was waiting for a response
- Year one of funding would focus on the Places and Communities theme, and Local Authorities would lead delivery
- Year two would focus on supporting local businesses, and work was ongoing with the Universities and other external partners to shape this offer
- Year three would focus on skills. The offer here had not yet been developed
- This yearly spending plan was mandated by Government, but work was ongoing to ease potential issues particularly cashflow and also getting a head start on designing and delivering skills initiatives
- Workshops were ongoing to develop the MCA's offer and to ensure that funding could be used as soon as possible after it was received from Government. External partners and local MPs had also been involved in this work
- A Partnership Group was being set up, which would advise on the shape and nature of interventions in the region.

The Board welcomed this work, but noted that European Regional Development funding would come to an end before UKSPF business support would be in place, which may result in a poor offer in terms of business support in the region.

RESOLVED: To note the update and to discuss membership of the Partnership Group.

57

Investment Zones

A report which set out the position of the Combined Authority on Investment Zones was presented to the Board.

It was noted that this policy could now be under review by Government, but that even without it, the MCA could use the information gathered to push forward development on key sites in the region.

No formal response had been given yet by Government on the submission.

A discussion was had about the possible negative impacts of the Investment Zones policy, and it was noted that Rotherham MBC had not submitted any sites in the submission.

RESOLVED: To note the submission of an Investment Zone Expression of Interest from the MCA.

58

Cultural and Creative Industries Mapping

A report commissioned by the MCA on Cultural and Creative Industries in the region was presented to the Board.

It was noted that this was a new area of work for the MCA, but one with good opportunities due to a vibrant cultural and creative sector in the region, and the possibility to align with initiatives such as UKSPF.

A presentation was given on the report. It included the following:

- The Office for National Statistics Business Register and Employment Survey estimated that there were approximately 13,500 people employed in cultural and creative industries in the region, but alternative analysis suggested that the figure was closer to 31,500.
- The highest concentration of these jobs was in town and city centres
- South Yorkshire has lower performance than the national average in terms of research and development funding, equity investments and University spinout companies
- However, in South Yorkshire creative industry was more flexibility and a higher level of collaboration was evident, with more agile use of contractors and freelancers in the sector
- There was also a legacy of strong independent creative outputs in the region in film, television, and music
- There was a conservative estimated value of £861m in this sector in the region, but which was thought to be closer to £2bn
- 18 out of the 21 priorities in the MCA Strategic Economic Plan were addressed by outputs of this sector
- There were strong opportunities for skills development and employment in this sector

It was asked whether the term 'cultural and creative industry' was too broad a label for several more distinct industries. It was responded that amplifying the benefit of cultural and creative industry through this strategy would be more effective.

The Board welcomed this work, supported its embedding within the MCA's work, and noted that though it does not sit naturally within the work of one Thematic Board, related activity should be brought to an appropriate Board.

It was also noted that supporting this sector aligns with the MCA's ambition for a stronger narrative for South Yorkshire. The West Yorkshire Cultural Manifesto was noted as a successful related initiative.

The Board asked for future updates on the implementation and resourcing of this work at future Boards.

RESOLVED: To endorse the report and recommendations

59 **The Economic Crisis Impact on Skills - Presentation**

RESOLVED: To defer this item to the next meeting of the Board, and to submit it as an item for the next Education, Skills and Employability Board agenda.

60 **Chief Executive's Update**

A verbal Chief Executive update was provided to the Board, which included:

- That the MCA Board had taken the decision to bring the Tram system back into public ownership
- A Bus Taskforce had been established, with a focus on passenger experience
- Progress was being made with City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements
- A bid had been made to the Levelling Up Fund, but no response had been given yet by Government
- An MCA Board was scheduled for 14th November, and would be considering: the organisational review, an amendment to the MCA Constitution to reduce quorum for Thematic Board Meetings, and the Integrated Rail Plan

RESOLVED: To note the update.

61 **Forward Plan**

A Forward Plan for future meetings of the Board was presented.

RESOLVED: To agree the Forward Plan, with above additions.

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

Signed

Name

Position

Date