

March 2020**Mayor's Update****Purpose of Report**

To provide LEP Board Members with an update on key Mayoral activity relating to the economic agenda.

1. Devolution

At its January meeting, the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) agreed to proceed with the implementation of the South Yorkshire Devolution Deal. This means that the region is now a step closer to receiving tens of millions of pounds in additional powers and resources.

The six-week public consultation on these proposals is now underway and will close on the 15th March. I look forward to hearing people's views on these important proposals to secure more powers and resources for the benefit of communities and businesses across South Yorkshire.

Following the completion of the consultation process a summary of the responses will be produced and considered by the MCA for submission to the Secretary of State. The SofS will then consider this information and produce a draft Order for the consent of the four South Yorkshire councils and the Mayor. The Order would then pass through the parliamentary process.

I am continuing to work with local leaders and Government so that this process can be completed as soon as possible, so that the benefits can be unlocked for the people and businesses of South Yorkshire.

2. Flooding

As you will all be aware, November saw our region hit by devastating floods and some residents are still unable to return to their homes.

I have called on the Government, including writing to the Prime Minister, to provide significant financial support for those communities affected. In my budget submission (discussed below) and in a letter to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs I have set out the case for hundreds of millions of pounds of much needed invest to protect homes, communities and businesses across South Yorkshire.

The devastating floods that hit our region in November, in addition to those following storms Ciara and Dennis and wider events around the world are evidence that our climate is changing. This is why we have declared a climate emergency. The work we deliver around creating sustainable and inclusive growth, including tackling climate change is of the utmost importance and will be at the forefront of everything we do.

3. Budget

As the first Budget since the country left the European Union and the General Election, the government will be judged on its ability to tangibly deliver on its commitments to 'level up' the economy. From transport, innovation and housing to culture, there are currently significant

disparities in the level of investment being made across the country. Through the Budget I will be looking for a step change in funding to begin to reverse these decade long trends.

I have written to the Chancellor setting out the specific proposals and projects that should be taken forward to deliver real benefits for the people of South Yorkshire. This includes measures to grow our economy building on our existing assets, create a transport network fit for the twenty first century and to address the climate emergency, including further action to mitigate the potential for future flooding.

With the M9 group of metro mayors, I have also written to the Chancellor making the case for the devolution of greater powers and resources, to bring more decisions closer to the people they affect and to provide longer term funding allocations to help us deliver on our respective priorities. I will continue to work my fellow metro mayors in making the case for more devolution, particularly as Government develops its Devolution White Paper.

4. Productivity debate

The themes at the heart of my budget submission also featured strongly in the Westminster Hall debate that I recently led on productivity. Productivity is one of the most important metrics by which the health of our economy can be assessed. It's important not least because it gauges how efficiently we produce goods and services but also because it is a means of improving prosperity.

With the country's productivity growth having collapsed to an average annual growth rate of 0.3% for the last decade, the Royal Statistical Society have awarded this performance the 'Statistic of the Decade'. Whilst there is universal agreement that there is no silver bullet solution to address this challenge, it is clear we must tackle the productivity crisis facing South Yorkshire. Our emerging transformative Strategic Economic Plan will set out our approach to do this in an inclusive and sustainable way.

5. Brexit

Now that the UK has left the European Union, we continue to monitor the potential impacts that may arise at the end of the transition period. As more information emerges from Government on the nature of the future arrangements it is possible to better understand the possible implications for South Yorkshire. For example, it will be important to consider the opportunities and challenges arising from the recent announcement regarding the migration policy on the region.

However, significant uncertainty remains on the nature of these future arrangements and as time progresses, the need for certainty will become even greater. This is vital for businesses, people and communities across South Yorkshire and beyond to plan for their own future.

The SCR Executive is continuing to monitor business intelligence from across the region regarding potential impacts and develop its own plans for the various scenarios that may arise.

6. Bus Review

As you will be aware, this time last year I asked Clive Betts MP to carry out a Bus Review. I know buses are a lifeline for communities across South Yorkshire, and bus services are one of the main topics of conversation that people raise with me as Mayor.

I am pleased that more than 6,600 people had their say in our Bus Review consultation, and I expect that the findings from our review will be published in the coming months. At this time, we will digest the contents and give our initial response.