

SHEFFIELD CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

AMP TECHNOLOGY CENTRE, WAVERLEY, ROTHERHAM, S60 5WG

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2017

PRESENT:

Councillor Chris Read, Rotherham MBC (Chair)
(Vice Chair)

Councillor Graham Baxter MBE, North East Derbyshire DC
Councillor Julie Dore, Sheffield CC
Councillor Simon Greaves, Bassetlaw DC
Councillor Sir Steve Houghton CBE, Barnsley MBC
Mayor Ros Jones CBE, Doncaster MBC

Councillor Trevor Ainsworth, Derbyshire CC
Joe Batty, Derbyshire CC
Fiona Boden, SCR Exec Team
Huw Bowen, Chesterfield BC
Steve Davenport, SYPTE
Andrew Gates, SCR Exec Team
Mark Lynam, SCR Exec Team
John Mothersole, Sheffield CC
Jo Miller, Doncaster MBC
Dave Smith, SCR Exec Team
Daniel Swaine, Bolsover DC / NE Derbyshire DC
Neil Taylor, Bassetlaw DC
Diana Terris, Clerk / Barnsley MBC
Craig Tyler, Joint Authorities Governance Unit
Paul Woodcock, Rotherham MBC

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Gilby, Councillor L Rose OBE,
Councillor A Syrett, D Bunton, A Frosdick, S Kemp and E Walker

Appointment of Chair

RESOLVED, that Cllr Chris Read be appointed Chair for the meeting.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted as above.

2 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

3 URGENT ITEMS

None.

4 ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

None.

5 VOTING RIGHTS FOR NON-CONSTITUENT MEMBERS

It was confirmed that voting rights could not be conferred on non-constituent Members in respect of agenda item 10 – Devolution Update as this matter regards the constituent Local Authorities only.

It was agreed there were no additional agenda items for which the non-Constituent Members should not have full voting rights.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO ANY ITEM OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

None received.

7 REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

None received.

8 RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

None received.

9 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received.

10 DEVOLUTION UPDATE

A paper was received to provide an update on the Sheffield City Region (SCR) Devolution Deal. The paper included an analysis of the options available to take the process forward and recommended that the City Region continues to progress its

existing Deal and launch a public consultation before the 21st September in order to ensure that the powers and functions are in place for the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), prior to the election of its first Mayor in May 2018.

D Smith informed Members of correspondence received from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Secretary of State (sent to Leaders and all Yorkshire MPs) which affirms the government's position on the matter of the SCR Devolution Deal. It was reported the government remains committed to a SCR deal and is not prepared to consider any deal which cuts across the SCR deal, nor will the government consider any proposal for a Yorkshire deal that includes one or more of the South Yorkshire councils. Furthermore, the government has no intention of seeking any further legislation to redress this position.

Members were invited to summarise their respective thoughts and positions.

Cllr Dore requested confirmation regarding what powers the Mayor would have if no consensus decision is reached on a way forward. D Smith confirmed that, as the matter stands, the outcome would be 'option 3' as referenced in the covering report. The elected Mayor would chair and be a voting member of the Combined Authority and have an equal say over future constitutional and devolution matters, but with few other powers. It was further noted that under this option the cost of the election and the costs associated with setting up and running the Mayor's office would have to be borne by the constituent authorities, at an estimated cost of £1m.

Cllr Dore recapped past discussions on the matters considered and decisions taken by Leaders in respect of maintaining a focus on economic regeneration that have brought the Authority to this point in time and highlighted some of the SCR's notable successes.

Cllr Dore indicated the SCR has an offer of first mover advantage' and noted the government's assertion that no deal can be better the one presented to the SCR.

Cllr Dore suggested the South Yorkshire districts' power would be diluted should they ever become part of a wider Yorkshire deal and noted that a South Yorkshire deal could be theoretically expanded in the future through the joining of further constitutional Members.

Cllr Dore further suggested the Leaders owe it to the people of South Yorkshire to undertake the public consultation exercise and that the action did not commit the Authorities to proceeding further.

Cllr Read indicated agreement with Cllr Dore's sentiment and noted he still wants to see the devolution of all available powers to the SCR and supports the recommendations as tabled.

Cllr Houghton thanked officers for their report and noted Barnsley had taken consideration of all aspects contained within, together with the intervention received from the Secretary of State.

Cllr Houghton suggested these were important decisions that would last for 30 years and we therefore need to be ensure we are content with those decisions.

Continued support for the principles of devolution was noted but it was suggested that much has changed from when the SCR's devolution process began, including the government's consideration of larger regional deals and different forms of deals.

Cllr Houghton commented on the supportive positions received from the Leaders of other Yorkshire districts regarding Barnsley being part of a wider Yorkshire deal, acknowledging the Secretary of State's current reluctance to consider a deal of this nature but noting there was still opportunity to convince the Secretary otherwise.

Cllr Houghton proposed a Yorkshire Mayor would be 'second only on the national stage to the London Mayor' and Barnsley wants to be part of that model of governance.

Cllr Houghton indicated his willingness to consider interim arrangements for South Yorkshire on the way to achieving a Yorkshire-wide deal.

Cllr Houghton suggested there are currently some unknowns regarding how much of the Devolution Deal funding might be diverted to fund projects such as HS2 and Supertram and therefore the financial position regarding the proposed deal is not as was originally presented. It was also suggested the advent of Brexit contributes further unknowns that need to be given appropriate consideration in respect of whether a deal for the South Yorkshire geography is the best option.

Cllr Houghton suggested that the government's pushing through of a Mayor for the SCR with no effective powers would be a mistake and urged their reconsideration on the matter.

Cllr Houghton indicated he has communicated Barnsley's position to local business leaders and received their endorsement for exploring a deal over a wider footprint.

In summary, Cllr Houghton proposed it would be disingenuous to carry on with the exercise as matters currently stand and better for Barnsley to be part of a wider Yorkshire deal involving a 'coalition of the willing'.

Cllr Jones indicated support for Cllr Houghton's comments and noted similar support for exploring the benefits of a deal over the widest geography possible. It was indicated to the meeting that feedback from Doncaster businesses shows 52% of businesses in favour of a Yorkshire deal.

Cllr Jones proposed that a Yorkshire deal would be the right deal for Doncaster.

The Chair noted that given 2 of the voting members were in favour of the recommendations, and 2 against; with no Chair's casting vote the recommendations are deemed to have been lost.

CHAIR