



Challenge and opportunity define every city looking to flourish. A new way of working in Sheffield, that brings together leaders from the public and private sector, is providing a model for those focussed on transforming our built environment and delivering good growth.

The built environment, like any industry, is defined by a seemingly endless list of questions. Questions posed by occupiers, investors, developers and politicians. Questions sometimes posed in private. Questions sometimes posed in public.

How do cities grow? Is it about fundamentals? The value of land? The ability to attract and retain talent? Is it about transport and infrastructure that provides connections to the wider world? Is it about institutions or personal leadership?

In Sheffield we start with a simple premise. Every answer and every investment starts with a conversation. A conversation about shared priorities. A conversation about how to unlock a site or deliver a reliable and secure return. A conversation about how to deliver growth that benefits all.

At a time of huge uncertainty we are unapologetically optimistic and confident. Drawing individuals and organisations from across our industry, private sector organisations involved in shaping the built environment have come together to convene the first formally constituted property association outside of London.

Our rationale is simple. Cities are not just buildings. Cities are an idea. An idea that we achieve more together.

Business models are being retired and new ones created as our wider economy and the high street encounters rapid change. Identifying the tools that will deliver the growth we need cannot be the responsibility of one single stakeholder, and we cannot look solely to government for solutions. Genuine leadership from the private sector is needed. The imperative for closer collaboration is evident. The need to work together meaningfully becomes increasingly more important.

The Sheffield Property Association, working with national and local government, is transforming how we collaborate. Our focus is on how to drive investment and growth in the city many of us call home. We are developing new ways of working to deliver benefits for all. Investment that will help fund frontline services and investments that will deliver solid returns for those wanting to put to work patient capital.

The world is changing. New ways of working need inventing to unlock growth, drive investment and improve productivity. Join us as we look to answer tomorrow's questions today.

Intrigued by the rhetoric? Visit www.sheffieldpropertyassociation.com to learn more about the reality.

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'Politics is the art of the achievable – and we're not achieving that at the moment'

Panellists at EG's Question Time event say the stalemate over the Sheffield City Region devolution deal must end if the area is to move forward and build on its reputation as a home for advanced manufacturing

Karl Tomusk
Data reporter

Businesses cannot sit and wait for the deadlock in South Yorkshire's devolution deal to end, although a resolution would give much-needed certainty, a panel argued at EG's Question Time in Rotherham.

Mark Jackson, director of Spring Real Estate Partners and a consultant to Scarborough Group, said: "[Devolution deals] are helpful when they happen but it's dangerous for a business to sit and wait for them or rely too much on them.

"The responsibility of the private sector, particularly in development, is to agitate and innovate. It's a matter of always making sure you're moving forward, rather than being reliant on these things."

Frustrations around the 2015 Sheffield City Region devolution plan have raged ever since Barnsley and Doncaster voted against it last year, despite previously agreeing to it.

The two local authorities want to pursue a

Yorkshire-wide devolution deal, whereas Sheffield and Rotherham want to move forward with the Sheffield City Region deal before approaching a Yorkshire-wide deal.

Lisa Pogson, joint managing director at South Yorkshire-based mechanical services firm Airmaster, said businesses need certainty around the future of the city region.

"I understand that from a political point of view it's never that simple, but from our point of view, we need to move forward," she said.

"I'm so proud to be from

South Yorkshire, and I think we all should be. Let's put South Yorkshire back on the map and then go for everything else. It's not an either/or. Let's get on with it."

Doncaster and Barnsley's U-turn came a week before last year's EG Question Time in Sheffield, where it was the key issue, with panellists likening it to Brexit-driven uncertainty. Little progress has been made since then, besides the election of Dan Jarvis as mayor of the Sheffield City Region this May – a position that has few powers while the stalemate continues.

Richard Caborn, chairman of the Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park, said: "Politics is the art of the achievable – and we're not achieving that at the moment. The government is saying: 'There's money there, there's power there and we'll unlock it on this basis.'

"That's got to be the reality of life, whatever people want. Do you then develop further for a regional structure? Obviously you do."

Despite the deadlock,

THE PANEL

- Richard Caborn, chair, Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park
- Mark Jackson, Scarborough Group
- Sharon Kemp, chief executive, Rotherham Council
- Lisa Pogson, joint managing director, Airmaster
- Chaired by Damian Wild, editor, EG

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Mark Jackson



Sharon Kemp



Lisa Pogson

there was some optimism from the panel.

Sharon Kemp, chief executive of Rotherham Council, said although "we might not be where we want to be" with the devolution deal, people were speaking and there's a desire for things to move forward. "We have to trust our leaders to be able to work together," she said.

Caborn, who helped set up the English regional development agencies under former prime minister Tony Blair, said Rotherham and Sheffield had worked together for a considerable time and there was increasing pressure from the business sector to see a deal go through.

The power of co-operation

Although the panel dwelt on the ongoing deadlock, much of the discussion was focused on the benefits of working together.

Councillors Julie Dore, from Sheffield Council, and Chris Read, from Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, cited supercar manufacturer McLaren, which signed a deal to base its new factory in Rotherham this May, as an example.

The deal adds to the region's impressive reputation – it is home to Boeing's first factory in Europe – for advanced manufacturing.

Dore said: "It was Sheffield City Council working with McLaren, Sheffield University and Rotherham Council officers as well. But, actually, McLaren is in Rotherham. It is a prime example of where

both Sheffield Council and Rotherham Council landed a fantastic global company."

Few local authorities work together as well as Sheffield and Rotherham, said Read, adding: "We sit next to one of the biggest cities in the country, which has two of the best universities in the country. To put a boundary up and hope we'll manage on our own or we'll be better off on our own is a bizarre concept."

The trust between all the stakeholders allowed them to land the McLaren deal, adding to the region's visibility on an international level.

"All of that is to the benefit of Rotherham, and the benefit of Sheffield," said Read. "You look at [Donald] Trump and you look at Brexit and you look at the difficulties we have faced with devolution, and the sentiment in all those things is quite similar.

"It's about place, a nervousness and a desire to protect your area first, perhaps losing sight of the fact that people don't live in boxes."

Turning to working with businesses, Dore said she hoped businesses understood that councils were an "extremely supportive" enabling force for and a partner in finding investment opportunities.

She said that while councils had a responsibility to provide certainty about the economy and the future of the region, businesses needed to make an effort to understand how the public sector works: "My frustration, I have to say to businesses, is when they complain about the processes of local authority."

She said the two main complaints were education and planning. But if the private and public sectors communicated more with each other, there would be a better understanding of those internal processes and how they could work together on common goals.

It was a point Jackson repeated in the panel discussion, saying: "Partnership with the public sector is talked about a lot but not done that well by many people. You have to give a bit. You have to learn the principles and the fact that the public sector runs on different petrol."

Complaining that you need something done in order to get next year's bonus will not persuade a local authority, he added.

2019 wish list

Julie Dore: "I'd like three Premier League football teams. It sounds like a flippant response, but when you look at the impact things like that have on the economy, it isn't just about individual businesses, it's about everything that we do across Sheffield City Region."

Chris Read: "I hate to go on about Brexit, but we need that resolved one way or another. Rotherham and Sheffield have benefitted enormously from EU structural and social funds in the past 20 years. The government is talking about replacing that, possibly with a model that can run through a city region, but we're four months away

from leaving and those conversations are still in outline and we don't know where that investment is going to be."

Richard Caborn: "I hope we get devolution over the line in the not-too-distant future. I would like to see some other big investments. I'm pretty sure we are going to – without giving too many things away. The development of the digital quarter is going to be huge."

Sharon Kemp: "To continue to get the message out. You've seen the positivity, the plans and how the partnerships are working. It's about getting that message out to a wider audience and for people to realise how special some of the things happening here are."

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Cities are not just buildings. Cities are an idea.

An idea that people achieve more together. We seek out interaction and influence. Conversations that spark collaborations. Meetings that trigger innovation.

We are the Sheffield Property Association. The only association of its kind outside of London. Our members represent the significant land owning and development businesses in our increasingly dynamic city.

Home to Boeing, McLaren and Rolls Royce. Sheffield thrives on collaboration and partnership.

Join us as we look to create a greater, better and more beautiful Sheffield.

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