



www.rotherhamcivicsociety.org

Secretary: Peter Hawkrige,
43 Scholes Lane,
Rotherham,
S61 2RG
Telephone: 0114 2464703
phawkrige@blueyonder.co.uk

7th March 2010

The Chief Executive

Dear Mr Kimber,

The Proposed Sheffield City Region

At a recent meeting of the Society's Executive Committee the matter of Sheffield City Council's involvement in the Waverley Development Scheme was discussed. This led on to a consideration of the issue of the Sheffield City Region initiative.

It was recalled by members that the creation of democratically elected regional government in England had been a commitment included in the Labour Party's 1997 election manifesto. For one reason or another, the Labour Government has failed during the ensuing years to introduce a decentralisation of power through these means.

The creation of City Regions appears to be the alternative model now being progressed, and Sheffield City Region has been regularly referred to in the national technical press during the last twelve months. As far as the Society is aware there has not been one mention of the establishment of the 'Sheffield City Region' in the local press. This is despite the fact that for the last six months at least a Ms. Sylvia Yates has been fulfilling the function of the Sheffield City Region Chief Executive.

I think I am correct in stating that the legal basis for the establishment of a City Region Board, and its administrative apparatus, was only provided by an Act of Parliament passed as recently as November 2009. Shortly after Royal Assent was granted the Leeds City Region was formally established.

In view of the above the Civic Society would be grateful to receive further information on what progress has been made towards the establishment of the Sheffield City Region, how much it has cost so far, what is its intended purpose, and what are the implications for the planning and delivery of services presently carried out by the democratically elected Borough Council. Equally important the Society would be interested to learn when the local ratepayers are to be informed of what could be a major development in local governance which is being introduced seemingly without any democratic mandate.

If there is no perceivable impact on the Borough Council's service delivery, then the conclusion must be drawn that the City Region body would be simply another quango in the style of Renaissance South Yorkshire and the European Objective 1 Secretariat. Given that there are potentially serious public expenditure cuts on the horizon the question has to be asked whether this is a luxury that the Council, and its neighbouring authorities, can ill afford.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary