

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 13 April 2026

Report Title

Don Valley Corridor

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Boston Castle
Brinsworth
Rawmarsh East
Rawmarsh West
Rotherham East
Rother Vale

Report Summary

This report provides detail to Cabinet on the establishment of the ‘Don Valley Corridor’ as a strategic economic growth initiative and Regeneration Programme for South Yorkshire. It sets out how the programme will be coordinated and how Rotherham Council will work with its partners, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) and Sheffield City Council (SCC), to jointly resource, collaborate and use a shared framework to prioritise, deliver and monitor activity within this Regeneration Programme.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Endorse the establishment of a Don Valley Corridor programme and partnership with SYMCA and SCC.
2. Endorse the establishment of a Mayoral Development Zone for the Don Valley Corridor with delegation to the Executive Director of Regeneration &

Environment, in consultation with the S151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy to agree the governance principles and implement the preferred model.

3. Agree to: allocate £400,000 of Gainshare revenue to the resourcing of the programme and project feasibility for its first 3 years, this being subject to SYMCA's formal approval; and delegate to the Executive Director of Regeneration & Environment, in consultation with S151 Officer and Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, the allocation of this £400,000 to specific activities.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Don Valley Corridor Spatial Plan
Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment Part A
Appendix 3 Climate Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[South Yorkshire Growth Plan](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Don Valley Corridor

1. Background

- 1.1 The Don Valley Corridor (DVC) has been identified in South Yorkshire's Local Growth Plan as a spatial priority for growth and regeneration. It is also identified as a focus for growth in the government's Northern Growth Strategy published on 19 March 2026.
- 1.2 The Corridor, as seen in Appendix 1, stretches from Sheffield City Centre through the Lower Don Valley to the Liberty Steel site at Aldwarke. Within this geography sit key regeneration priorities, including Rotherham Town Centre, Bassingthorpe and Rotherham Gateway station. The geography includes some of the Borough's most deprived wards as well as key employment areas at Aldwarke, Templeborough and the Advanced Manufacturing Park.
- 1.3 This geography combines the potential for inclusive housing and employment growth, alongside established innovation assets and existing infrastructure investment. Across the entire DVC geography, investment is expected to deliver in the region of 10,500 new homes, 18,500 new jobs and an annual Gross Value Added (GVA) uplift of £1.3bn, as confirmed in the 'Economic outputs from the development of strategic sites across the Don Valley' report by ADE Regeneration in November 2025.
- 1.4 Regeneration of this scale is a major undertaking, with benefits likely to be delivered over several decades. Challenges around this scale of transformation are well known:
 - Short term funding cycles
 - Lack of private sector confidence
 - Ensuring inclusive growth
 - Lack of shared or consistent vision
 - Lack of co-ordination within and across geographies
- 1.5 To tackle these issues and create the best chance of success, the Council has been working with SYMCA and SCC to create a strategic partnership which aims to:
 - Address a core economic challenge of coordinating growth across fragmented geographies to deliver genuine transformation at scale.
 - Create a unified investment environment with clear infrastructure planning, reduced fragmentation, and access to a pipeline of competitively positioned sites for national and private investment.
 - Create employment pathways across the region, enhanced housing options and improved transport connectivity that reduces commuting challenges.
 - Anchor investments that will make communities more resilient and attractive.
 - Deliver the biggest single project in the Corridor – Rotherham Gateway Station.

1.6 To date, the partnership has established a spatial vision, economic assessment, investment framework and an emerging project pipeline. The next step is to formalise the programme through a clear governance structure and resourcing model. This is now the right time to be doing this with momentum on Rotherham Gateway station and with the Don Valley Corridor now being recognised within Government as being of national significance.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Rotherham's Priority Schemes

2.1.1 The Don Valley Corridor encompasses some of Rotherham's major regeneration projects.

- Rotherham Gateway: A new mainline rail and tram/train station surrounded by commercial space and the potential for 300 new homes with transformational potential for connectivity and economic growth.
- Rotherham Town Centre: Continuing regeneration opportunity following the adoption of the Town Centre Masterplan in 2017. Regeneration work in the town centre includes Forge Island, Central Markets & Library and the Health Hub with the development of c300 new homes over the next 5 years.
- Bassingthorpe Farm: A new community of c2,000 new homes, situated close to Rotherham Gateway and the town centre.
- Templeborough: Building on this thriving industrial hub through works to Magna and seeking available land to continue supporting new and existing businesses.

2.2 Establishing a Mayoral Development Zone

2.2.1 In agreeing to partner on the DVC, the Council will move into the establishment of a Mayoral Development Zone.

2.2.2 A Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) is a non-statutory entity. It differs from a Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) which is a statutory entity with special powers which needs to follow a specific legal process to designate. Examples of the MDZ approach include Newcastle-Gateway Mayoral Development Zone, Atom Valley Greater Manchester and Ashton, Tameside.

2.2.3 An MDZ does not confer statutory powers, change planning authority functions, alter land ownership or governance, create new administrative bodies, predetermine future delivery vehicles, or commit the partners to statutory or other intervention.

2.2.4 The creation of an MDZ signals to Government, and potential public and private sector partners, that the partnership is committed in using its existing

strategic economic development and regeneration powers, resources and relationships to progress this integrated place-based programme.

- 2.2.5 For those reasons, an MDZ is a preferred model for the partnership. Cabinet is asked to endorse the establishment of a Mayoral Development Zone for the Don Valley Corridor with delegation to agree the governance principles and implement this model.

2.3 Resourcing

- 2.3.1 Commitment to this partnership and the scale of this programme requires resourcing to co-ordinate activity across the geography and develop co-investment proposals. SYMCA will provide a core central co-ordinating team to drive strategic programme development across the Don Valley Corridor as a whole, and will deliver any SYMCA-led projects or assist scheme delivery as required.
- 2.3.2 For Rotherham's schemes, project development will be led by the Council. While much of the existing Regeneration programme is focussed within this geography, the establishment of the MDZ will drive a greater scale of activity and will require pace.
- 2.2.3 The scale of this expanded programme will require prioritisation of resources within the Council. Overseeing the development of all DVC related projects, including Rotherham Gateway, will impact across Directorates, in particular the Regeneration team, and Council wide services, such as Communications, Procurement, Legal, Planning and Finance.
- 2.3.4 Where appropriate, shared commissioning routes such as joint procurement between regional partners, will be considered for feasibility, masterplanning, viability, land and infrastructure studies so that technical work is delivered once and applied many times, with procurement efficiencies and consistent standards.

2.4 Governance

- 2.4.1 The Don Valley Corridor's complexity, multiple landowners, cross-boundary coordination, significant infrastructure requirements, and diverse funding sources requires formal governance structures that prevent fragmentation. This approach will identify overlaps and gaps, ensuring programme-level issues are escalated consistently.
- 2.4.2 Governance will be proportionate, transparent and grounded in the principles of subsidiarity. No additional assurance barriers will be created and funding allocation will continue to progress through the SYMCA Assurance Framework.
- 2.4.3 The proposed model will see the establishment of a Don Valley Programme Board for co-ordination of cross border activities. This Board will report into SYMCA's Board and Investment Board as required.

2.4.4 Decision-making on Rotherham schemes will remain with Rotherham's own assurance and governance processes.

2.5 Funding and Delivery Strategy

2.5.1 Together the partnership will create a comprehensive funding and delivery strategy by summer 2026. Behind this is the development of a co-investment model which will see local commitment of Gainshare in order to leverage in regional, national and private investment.

2.5.2 Gainshare is funding provided by SYMCA which originated as part of the devolution deal with central government. Each Local Authority in South Yorkshire has been allocated an amount per year for 30 years, starting in 2020/21. Both Rotherham and Sheffield Councils will look to utilise some Gainshare funding to develop the Don Valley Corridor and thoughts on this will be developed as part of the funding strategy referred to in 2.5.1. Any specific propositions for the use of Gainshare funding will be subject to future Cabinet approval.

2.5.3 Each authority will commit £400,000 of its Gainshare revenue allocation toward programme resourcing and feasibility work for priority projects for the first three years of the programme.

2.5.4 SYMCA are currently identifying potential funding partners and exploring potential co-investment models. This approach is intended to raise the profile of DVC onto a national stage to leverage both public and private funding, maximising the impact and reach of the regional investment through Gainshare funding.

2.6 Communications

2.6.1 The Don Valley Corridor will require a coordinated communications plan, including engagement with Government, investors, and local communities.

2.6.2 A coherent joint narrative will be developed for the DVC that is accessible to the people and communities who will be affected by the programme, as well as attractive to investors, developers, and potential delivery partners. This narrative will articulate the long-term vision for the area, the opportunities the programme will unlock, and the benefits it will deliver for South Yorkshire's economy and communities.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 **Option 1:** Establish a strategic delivery programme with appropriate governance, resourcing, and a statement of intent for a Mayoral Development Zone.

3.2 This option formalises the Don Valley Corridor as a nationally significant regeneration programme with a dedicated governance structure,

programme leadership, and a coordinated approach to funding, delivery, and investment. Without coordination, opportunities scatter across isolated projects. With it, investors see credibility, residents see genuine opportunity, and places see sustained improvement rather than episodic development.

This option is recommended.

- 3.3 **Option 2:** Do not bring together a strategic delivery programme for the Don Valley Corridor.
- 3.4 Under this option, the Council would continue to develop projects in isolation without establishing a coordinated programme or governance structure. Delivery would proceed on a site-by-site basis, led by individual partners. Fragmented delivery could result in duplication, inefficiency, and failure to maximise the cumulative impact of investment resulting in the loss of strategic opportunity to build a compelling investment case to Government and investors.

This option is not recommended.

- 3.5 **Option 3:** Pursue a statutory delivery model such as a Mayoral Development Corporation
- 3.6 Under this option, SYMCA would move directly to preparing a formal proposal for establishing an MDC, including statutory consultation and submission to the Secretary of State. Premature establishment could create a costly and rigid structure before there is a fully developed programme or evidenced need. Potential misalignment with partners or insufficient readiness could weaken early delivery.

This option is not recommended.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Due to the existing regeneration work within this geography, extensive consultation has been undertaken in relation to Rotherham's key projects. As schemes are developed the Council will continue to consult with residents on their needs and the design and delivery of schemes.
- 4.2 Communications around the launch of the partnership will highlight opportunities for residents, communities, and businesses and ensure clear messaging about what the Don Valley Corridor Programme aims to achieve.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 It is proposed that there is a DVC investor launch at the UK Real Estate, Investment and Infrastructure (UKREiiF) conference in Leeds on 19 May 2026. This will be aimed at communicating the long term vision and commitment to the DVC and marketing the investment opportunities in the corridor.

- 5.2 SYMCA, together with the two Councils, are in the process of establishing the draft Governance structure and then subsequently the first scheduled meeting of the Programme Board.
- 5.3 Resourcing is already being allocated to priority projects; however the escalating scale and pace of the programme is likely to require prioritisation of additional resources post Cabinet.
- 5.4 A joint funding strategy is due to be established by Summer 2026.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 This report seeks endorsement for establishing the Don Valley Corridor (DVC) partnership, exploring governance and allocating £400k of gainshare funding to do this as requested by SYMCA. Gainshare is a grant provided by SYMCA, for which there is further detail at 2.5.2. The £400k will be split indicatively between officer time (£230k) and feasibility for the Council's priority projects (£170k). The priorities need to be established. There is sufficient grant remaining to fund this, although it will be subject to an application to SYMCA.
- 6.2 A funding model for the Corridor itself has not yet been completed and is expected in Summer 2026.
- 6.3 There are no direct procurement implications associated with the recommendations detailed in the report. However, it must be noted that where the engagement of third-party suppliers is required to support delivery of these actions, and the wider projects in the DVC programme, they must be procured in compliance with relevant procurement legislation (Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023) as well as the Council's Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules. Consideration will need to be given to the complexities of the requirements and the necessary timescales required.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 A Mayoral Development Zone is a strategic designation of a usually significant area. It is policy driven with a focus on investment, growth and collaboration. As stated in the body of the report, a Mayoral Development Zone is non-statutory, insofar as it is not established under any specific legislation. As such an MDZ does not confer statutory powers or establish a separate corporate entity as would the option of setting up a Mayoral Development Corporation as referred to above.
- 7.2 A Mayoral Development Corporation would be established under the Localism Act 2011, Chapter 2, involving the specific identification of a Mayoral Development Area, which would then lead to a prescribed process involving consultation, a submission to the Secretary of State and the making of an Order establishing a Mayoral Development Corporation.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 The programme represents a significant uplift in activity and may require the prioritisation of additional posts and/or the reallocation of existing resources.
- 8.2 Any proposals to create, amend or recruit to posts will be subject to the Council's agreed HR and job evaluation processes, including workforce planning, consultation with recognised Trade Unions, and approval through the appropriate governance routes.
- 8.3 Where external specialist support is required to meet programme delivery timescales, the Council's procurement and commissioning procedures must be followed.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 No direct implications are anticipated. However, a core aim of the partnership is to deliver community-focused regeneration and revitalisation. By achieving this aim, the programme will create greater opportunities for children and young people across the Borough.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 This report seeks approval to partner with SYMCA & Sheffield Council to develop a programme, funding and governance proposals to enable the progression of a series of projects within the economic growth corridor of Don Valley.
- 10.2 Key objectives of the partnership are:
 - Growing Our Neighbourhoods and Communities
 - Community-Focussed Regeneration and Revitalisation

Equalities will be explored in depth as projects develop to ensure no individuals are disadvantaged and opportunity is truly inclusive.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 Projects within the programme will develop over the coming years and Carbon Impact Assessments will be developed as the project detail is developed. It is therefore difficult to assess the impact of the programme at this time. A general assumption is made that during the construction phases emissions will increase, however in the long run a positive impact will be generated.
- 11.2 The partnership has developed the following objectives to ensure the programme delivers the greatest impact.
 - Transformational Re-Use of Land - Large, underused sites are available for redevelopment, opportunities for transformation reuse. Large-scale opportunities for new housing and employment-led mixed-use development.

- Deliver Opportunities for Climate Resilience - Transformational redevelopment from a legacy of heavy industry through a sustainable approach to place-making. Positive impacts on health and environment through a future-proofed approach to regeneration.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 The success of the DVC is dependent on each of the three authorities working in partnership. SYMCA have confirmed their commitment to the proposals at MCA Board on 24 March. Sheffield City Council have made the same commitments as Rotherham.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Regeneration of this scale will increase pressure on delivery teams including Regeneration, Procurement, Legal, Finance and Communications services. Discussions are underway with each service to allocate dedicated resources to the progression of DVC; however this will take time and require additional funds.

13.2 The DVC contains some of Rotherham's most significant regeneration priorities and the Council is moving at pace to deliver against these schemes. It is essential partnering in this manner only seeks to accelerate and ensure delivery and does not slow down or dilute Rotherham's objectives. To mitigate this risk Council officers will continue to influence the DVC programme as a whole promoting Rotherham's projects as priorities which are achievable and well developed.

14. Accountable Officers

Andrew Bramidge, Executive Director Regeneration & Environment

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	20/03/26
Executive Director of Corporate Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	16/03/26
Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	12/03/26

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