

NOTES OF A GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD DISCUSSION HELD AT 16:20 ON WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2021 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS LIVE EVENTS

1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed all present. It was noted that the meeting was not quorate, and therefore a private discussion session would take place, and that any decisions required would take place through the agreed written procedure set out in the terms of reference following the discussion.

STRATEGY

2 GM INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

- Roger Milburn (Chair of the Greater Manchester Strategic Infrastructure Board (SIB)) introduced a report that updated the Partnership on SIB infrastructure development and its future working relationship with the GM LEP.
- It was advised that since adopting a more formalised approach to the SIB two years ago, the Board had taken on two primary elements to its work. Firstly, the adoption of the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Framework 2040, and secondly the underpinning of this with 11 separate infrastructure challenges noted within the report.
- Members commented on how well the SIB had brought together previously fractious elements of the market together for the benefit of Greater Manchester, with a clear integration into governance and future plans.
- The powerful recommendations arising from the SIB were highlighted. Such as the SIB's recommendations around broadband infrastructure being focussed on the towns and regions on the outer edges of GM.
- The importance of working with the SIB on work going forward, such as Net Zero Carbon activity, was highlighted. The SIB could work with the LEP on how the milestones could be best achieved in the timeframes; skills needed; appropriate investments; what could be done by government & locally etc.
- The importance of collaborative pan-GM work around Innovation GM was highlighted.
- The Chair of the SIB stated that there was a need to think about 'infrastructure' as something wider than simply transport connectivity. Equal to the importance of transport, were utilities (energy/water/drainage), which would become increasingly vital going forward; and thirdly digital infrastructure – which has proven its importance in how much it had underpinned the work of the last

twelve months. These three lynchpins were all interconnected and one could not succeed without equal focus being given to the other two.

3 GM INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

- Mike Blackburn advised that six months ago a one-year International Strategy had been prepared, with plans to undertake a review about when to best (in light of ongoing Covid issues) widen the remit to restart an International Strategy that covers a number of years. It was felt that now would be the right time to start moving on this.
- The Growth Company and MIDAS had been working with the Department and International Trade (DIT) to get more resource into GM. DIT representative Christos Kottis provided some further insight – stating that a lot of collaborative work was taking place across relevant sectors about how to boost exporting, not just for existing exporters, but those who may not have previously had the confidence to get involved.
- Feedback was sought on the Export Plan which would be fed back outside of the meeting.

GOVERNANCE

4 LEP CAPACITY FUNDING 2021/22

- The allocation of the 2021/22 LEP core funding was discussed including the proposed priorities for in the forthcoming year in line with the GM Economic Vision.
- Approval would be considered through the agreed written procedure set out in the terms of reference.

PERFORMANCE

5 LOCAL GROWTH FUND UPDATE

- The deadline for full allocation spend was 31st March. Following this the LGF would no longer exist and would be replaced by new government funding initiatives. This formed a final request to allow LA CEX's to apply flexibility to how the funds would be allocated. A full reconciliation of the spend would be provided following this.
- Approval would be considered through the agreed written procedure set out in the terms of reference.

6 BOARD MEMBER FEEDBACK ON MEETINGS

- The annual LEP performance review had taken place. Broadly the feedback had been strong.

7 GM ECONOMIC DASHBOARD

- Noted.

8 GROWTH COMPANY BUSINESS SUPPORT UPDATE

- There had been a notable hiatus on activity over the previous month. This was possibly down to businesses waiting to see the national roadmap from the government. Generally, business had welcomed the roadmap when it was announced. Businesses were now waiting for the outcomes of next week's Budget announcements.
- In general, more businesses were moving towards a positive mindset looking forward – with lots of discussions taking place around growth.
- More reflective thinking appeared to be taking place about returning to the office-based environment, with more nuance now than the initial pendulum swing thinking.

Session closed at: 17:10

The next meeting of the Board would take place on Thursday 18th March 2021