**LEP STRATEGY PROGRAMME BOARD – AGENDA ITEM 7**

Subject: LEP Draft Recovery Plan Feedback and Update

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Meeting date: Friday 14th May 2021

**Purpose**

To provide a summary of feedback on the draft LEP Recovery Plan to the Strategy Programme Board along with an updated draft, for comments and approval.

**Recommendations**

The Strategy Programme Board is asked to: -

1. Discuss and provide comments on the feedback report and the updated draft Recovery Plan.
2. Confirm members/the Strategy Board are content with the draft plan, with any comments.

**Background**

The draft Recovery Plan incorporates the LEP’s priorities for delivery over 2021-22 and the LEP’s ambition to meet the subregional vision for the recovery of Cheshire and Warrington from COVID-19, which is to make our area the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and fastest growing place in the country.

The draft Plan was consulted on extensively, having been issued to the LEP’s stakeholder mailing list (550 people) and uploaded to the LEP website with a feedback email address. Consultation sessions were held online via Zoom with numbers per session restricted to around 20 to ensure everyone had the chance to contribute. 8 sessions were/are being held between 15th April and 13th May, with at least one additional session planned over the summer (with ChALC). Additionally, we held a number of focused sessions with local authority partners and Place Chairs.

We have attempted to pull together all of the summarised feedback comments into a paper in Annex A, and have attached the draft Recovery Plan with tracked changes (Annex B). Members now have the opportunity to consider the changes in the light of the feedback received and offer any further comments.

**Feedback and discussion**

Within the feedback, and given the high levels of engagement, there was strong support for the overall vision and that the priorities set out are the right ones.

A number of participants wanted to understand further how they could best get involved in the work and for the document to show their contributions to the subregional vision for recovery. We were also given further examples to bring the vision to life, which we will incorporate in case studies, balanced across the geography and by partners and theme.

Local authorities and third sector partners in particular were keen to understand how we could join up activities, and include a wider range of priority actions across the subregion, and a more comprehensive way of monitoring progress. Some feedback suggested the LEP could go further e.g. on the healthy and inclusive themes, and therefore we’d want to have further conversations with partners to understand in more detail the LEP’s role in this.

Given the uncertainty caused by the rapidly changing circumstances of the recovery, and to accommodate further discussions about the delivery of the subregional vision, we have undertaken to produce a longer-term strategy document in the next financial year, and this is outlined in the Plan.

A key next step will therefore be to work closely with the three local authorities and wider partners to ensure all our plans dovetail in the most effective way to deliver the subregional vision for all our places.

**Finalising the document**

As there are still one or two further consultation sessions, there will be some further comments to take on board. We also plan to include further case studies, as stated above, include a Chair’s foreword and finalise the presentation of the document. Given that the document is a recovery plan and the focus is on short term actions, it is important to get the document out quickly. The document will go to the LEP Board on 19th May.

**ANNEX A**

LEP Recovery Plan Consultation

15th April – 13th May 2021

*Italic – items that were raised at least twice during the consultations*

**Themes that need to be given greater emphasis:**

* *Inclusive economic growth.*
* *Reducing social and economic inequality.*
* *Reducing the health inequality amplified by covid.*
* *Longer term goals.*
* *The role of government.*
* *Links to other recovery plans in the North West (LCR, Manchester, Staffordshire).*
* *C&W places – more case studies*
* *Transport / infrastructure issues.*
* *Social impact values.*
* *The strengths of the region and their international reach.*
* *Information on available grants and how businesses can access them.*
* *The impact of the pandemic on disabled people and the effects of long covid.*
* *Agriculture.*
* Sport and leisure.
* How the Economic Resilience Cell supports the third sector.
* The role of the chamber of commerce.

**More support would be beneficial for:**

* *The sectors hit the hardest (visitor, retail hospitality).*
* *The third sector.*
* *Local attractions.*
* *Start ups and scale ups.*
* *Young people.*
* *Over 50s.*
* *The creative and cultural sector.*
* *Landlords to convert their traditional office spaces into bookable office hubs that match with the changed working patterns.*
* *Commercially non-viable transport routes.*

**Closer relationships need to be built out to deliver the objectives with:**

* The national investment bank, and other investors.
* *Homes England.*
* *EA.*
* *Highways Agency.*

**The LEP needs to provide a clearer guidance on:**

* *How Local Authorities and other partners e.g. community/voluntary/third sector organisations can support the LEP in delivering the vision.*
* *How local authority plans can be incorporated in the document*
* How apprenticeships can support the wider agenda.
* Why growth needs to be fast.
* How economic actions can support the wider vision.
* *How the LEP will attract inward investment.*
* How the green infrastructure is going to be built out to support the transition to electric vehicles.
* New green technologies available for industry.
* Who is the target audience for the plan

**The LEP needs to refine:**

* Targets and measurement (KPIs/dashboards).
* *The sustainability roadmap / planning for net zero.*
* The role of the Growth Hub, how it interacts with other subregional organisations.
* The section on the business case readiness fund, what kind of projects are eligible.
* That Covid-19 will be around for the next 2-3 years and how this will be dealt with
* How infrastructure investment can support inclusivity
* The executive summary

**The LEP could include some of the following policies/activities already happening in the subregion:**

* *The Vauxhall site and the possibility of it developing electric vehicles.*
* *Northern Power Towns project*
* The decommissioning of the old nuclear site on Anglesey.
* The Mersey Forest tree planting ambitions.
* The ambition to make the Sandstone Ridge an AONB.
* Waterways and flood prevention work.
* Journey first.
* “This is me northwest initiative” This is a pioneering campaign that seeks to reduce the stigma and dispel the myths of poor mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

**The LEP could include some of the following policies/activities needed in the subregion:**

* *Attracting people who are leaving big cities into the subregion.*
* *Promotion of a healthy lifestyle.*
* *Green planning requirements for new housing including public transport links.*
* *Reshoring supply chains.*
* *Repurposing vacant office and retail spaces.*
* *A sign posting mechanism for business owners to help deal with their employees’ mental health problems and link them up with the relevant charities.*
* *Providing better public transport links to Alderley park instead of new parking spaces*
* *Identifying the innovation challenges and future skill needs and letting the universities know so they can deliver that research and those qualifications.*
* *Spreading good practice and help SMEs directly with getting back to the office and making it covid secure.*
* The Workforce Recovery Group and the Kickstart programme to prioritise sectors.
* Adult IAG.
* Digital solutions in rural areas which is not financially attractive to private investment.
* Liaising with neighbouring LEPs to come up with deals that encourage visitors to drop in Cheshire when making the journey to a neighbouring region and vice versa.
* Convincing the elderly that it is safe to go outside and restart their pre-covid lifestyle by making shops and workplaces covid secure.
* Setting up a working group/forum on the life sciences sector.
* Training provided to employers to understand the needs of disabled employees.
* Retraining older people like the previous Love in the hill programme.

**Comments regarding the format of the document:**

* More infographics and pictures.
* Digestible length for SMEs.
* The structure is not intuitive e.g. life sciences in health and infrastructure in inclusivity