**LEP Strategy Committee**

**MINUTES (DRAFT)**

Meeting Held: Friday 7th August 2020

Via Microsoft Teams

**Present:**

Robert Mee (Chair) Nicola Dunbar Robert Davis

Graeme Bristow John Downes Catherine Walker

Andy Hulme

**Apologies:**

Philip Cox Peter Skates Steve Park

Charlie Seward

**Attending:**

Rob Mason (ION Developments)\*

Steve Parry (ION Developments)\*

Brad Pomfret (Cheshire Football Centre Ltd)\*

Steve Merridew (BDP Architects)\*

\*To AI 3a only

Jim Rouquette (Natural Capital Solutions)\*\*

Teresa Fenn (RPA)\*\*

Joe Morris (Morris Resource Economics)\*\*

\*\* To Item 3b only

**Agenda Item 1: Welcome, Introductions & Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Philip Cox, Charlie Seward (represented by Catherine Walker), Peter Skates, and Steve Park.

**Agenda Item 2: Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**Agenda Item 3a: Presentation – Centre of Excellence for Football, Winsford**

The Chair welcomed Rob Mason and Steve Parry of Ion Developments, plus Brad Pomfret of Cheshire Football Centre Ltd and Steve Merridew of BDP to the meeting.

Rob and Steve gave a short presentation setting out the proposals to develop a nationally significant Football Centre of Excellence at the Knights Grange complex in Winsford. The project, which aims to start on site in 2021, would provide a home for Women’s Elite Football, offer training facilities for visiting international and Premiership football teams and offer an extensive community sports hub. The development proposals also include the provision of a 4-star hotel and conference centre.

Sustainability (the project is aiming to be net-zero in operation) and the provision of employment and training opportunities for local people are core principles of the development.

Proposals for the scheme are well developed, with a planning application programmed for submission by the end of 2020. Presently there remains a funding gap but the team remain confident that the overall proposition will be sufficiently attractive when taken to potential funding partners, that this will be overcome.

The Committee expressed its thanks to the team for the presentation (copy of slides attached with the minutes), and members were very supportive of the objectives and outcomes that the project could help deliver. There was agreement that the project aligns well with the LEP strategic objectives on Quality of Place and also improved health and well-being. It was a suggested that a further conversation be arranged with the LEP to explore further how the LEP might be able to support the project.

***ACTION: LEP to arrange a further conversation with ION and Cheshire West and Chester to discuss the project.***

**Agenda Item 3b Presentation – Natural Capital Audit and Investment Plan**

The Chair welcomed Jim Rouquette (Natural Capital Solutions), Teresa Fenn (Risk and Policy Analysts) and Jim Morris (Morris Resource Economics ) to the meeting.

Jim and Teresa gave a short presentation on the first phase of work that has been undertaken to develop a Natural Capital Audit and Investment Plan for the sub-region (slides attached to the minutes for information). Developing a Natural Capital ‘baseline’ is an important step in understanding the economic value of the natural environment and so informing policy on how to invest to improve the environment to support activities like flood alleviation, carbon sequestration and improved air quality.

Work to date has mapped the land use habitats in Cheshire and Warrington down to a very fine detail. This shows that the majority habitat in the area is ‘improved and amenity grassland’. Less than 5% of the sub-region is classed as ‘built up’.

Knowing the land use and habitat typology allows the consultants to calculate a baseline value for the ecosystem service.

A review has also been carried out to understand the current policy landscape nationally and locally to establish how this supports (or runs against) ambitions to improve the environment. The work has been summarised in an interim report.

***ACTION: Andy Hulme to circulate the interim report to Strategy Committee members, for information***

The next phase of work involves development of the investment plan and identification of priority areas for improvement. This will be tested at a stakeholder workshop in September.

The Committee welcomed the content of the presentation. Robert Davis highlighted the importance of linking this work in with that of the proposed Sustainability Commission and suggested that it would be beneficial for one of the team to possibly join the Commission.

Graeme Bristow queried whether there were examples of areas that have developed and utilised this sort of information in a really good way. It was indicated that many areas are still to undertake this kind of assessment and that there was an opportunity for Cheshire and Warrington to be an exemplar nationally.

**Agenda Item 4: Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The Committee approved the Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 12th June 2020. All actions were completed. There were no matters arising.

**Agenda Item 5: Public Speaking Time**

No members of the meeting were present at the meeting.

**Agenda Item 6: Covid-19 Restart and Recovery Activity**

The contents of the report were noted.

Andy Hulme highlighted the proposed approach to the development of the plan for recovery and growth and the key messages that the plan would convey. Feedback was sought on the proposed structure of the plan, noting that it had been flagged that specific reference is needed to the economy in rural areas.

The plan will link to the opportunities and priorities identified during preparation of the Local Industrial Strategy for the sub-region and will also highlight how recovery activity could align to and support the national priorities set out in the Comprehensive Spending Review. It will also identify some more specific short-term activity and investments that could accelerate recovery and create jobs. It was noted that the sub-regional investment pipeline is being reviewed to support this work.

 Current programme for the plan would see a draft developed by the end of August in order to support a series of virtual stakeholder roundtables arranged for early September, with a revised version then available to coincide with the LEP AGM at the end of September.

**Agenda Item 7: Strategy Update**

The contents of the report were noted.

Andy Hulme updated on the status of the Strategy work programme and Delivery Plan. No activities are currently flagged as red (high risk) and progress overall remans good.

It was confirmed that the output report from the Stage 1 Industrial Decarbonisation Roadmap project was nearing completion and would be circulated once available. The Stage 2 bid has been submitted, boosted by the addition of a number of key industrial partners including Scottish Power Energy Networks and Engie.

The Interim report from the Digital Infrastructure Plan was noted. Graeme Bristow asked that consideration be given to wider digital system requirements beyond just the fibre and mobile data provision.

***ACTION: Industrial Decarbonisation Roadmap Stage 1 report to be circulated.***

**Part B Agenda Items (Non-Public Items)**

**Agenda Item 8 – Non-Public Items.**

There were no items for discussion under this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 9 – any Other Business**

The government has announced plans for major reforms to the planning process. John Downes suggested that a summary paper prepared by Andy Farrall be shared with the members of the Strategy Committee.

The details of the Comprehensive Spending Review priorities were announced at the end of July. These include a focus on research and innovation and investing to support recovery after Covid-19. Responses to the CSR proposals need to be submitted by 24th September.

Two projects in the sub-region have received confirmation of government funding. A joint Strength in Places Fund bid led by Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) and the Anti-Microbial Research Centre at Alderley Park has received £18.6m to support a five-year project to create eight specialist research platforms for infectious diseases therapeutics.

Secondly, Urenco has received over £10m to support development of its U-Battery Small Modular Reactor.

Government has launched its Research and Development Roadmap which sets out the UK’s vision and ambition for science, research and innovation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-research-and-development-roadmap>

**Agenda Item 10 – Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Next meeting: Friday 8th October 2020, 9:00am, location TBC