

**HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST (HOTSW) LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP
(LEP) JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

20 June 2019

Present:-

Councillors R Williams (Vice-Chair), J Brazil, G Derrick, R Hosking, J Lock and J Morris

Apologies:-

Councillors J Brook, R Bloxham, M Lewis, C A Paul and L Howgate

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillor Hodgson

* **16** **Minutes**

(Councillor Hodgson attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2019 be signed as a correct record, subject to the correction of Minute *13 (Inclusive Growth) with the addition under bullet point 5 to read: “the challenge of social inclusivity in a largely rural area *and environmental impacts;*” and the inclusion of an additional bullet point to read “*a lack of reference to renewable energies and tourism as growth potential within the programme*”.

* **17** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no item raised as a matter of urgency.

* **18** **Local Industrial Strategy**

(Councillor Hodgson attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Committee considered the Report of the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership which updated the Committee on the LEP performance report from CLGU and improvement plan and also shared the work in progress on the emerging Local Industrial Strategy which was due to be discussed by the Joint Committee in July 2019.

The Report gave the headline achievements since the last meeting which included the revised articles for the LEP which had been submitted, the Institute of Technology bid was successful and the expression of interest for the Environmental Technologies accelerator was also successful. £255,000 for Digital Momentum from the Digital Skills pilot had been secured as well as £53m Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) funding for South-west Exeter to support housing growth in the wider Exeter area. There were also other highlights, including recipients of the Coastal Communities Fund, a relaunch of the GSW APPG at the House of Commons, and £75,000 received for the Skills Advisory Panel.

Other schemes in the pipeline included Stronger Towns Funding (for the south west) which was confirmed but the prospectus (from MHCLG) and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was not yet issued.

In relation to Performance, Appendix 1 set out the conclusions of the Annual Performance Review from CLGU following the LEP's submission (which had been previously shared with the Scrutiny Committee) and subsequently, a Delivery and Improvement Plan for the forthcoming 12 months was attached at Appendix 2 of the Report.

On the Local Industrial Strategy, the Committee noted that in recent weeks there had been a significant change in the political leadership of the Heart of the South West Local Authorities. The Chief Executive recapped on progress so far, the next steps and asked for the Scrutiny Committee to reaffirm how they would wish to engage with the emerging plan.

The Chief Executive also circulated in his paperwork the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Delivery Plan 2019-20, the Heart of the South West Delivery Improvement Plan 2019-20 and Quarter 4 Dashboard which showed deliverables progress, financial progress and RAG ratings for specific projects.

In discussion Members asked questions and debated the following issues:

- concerns for the economy, including the need to bring in skills for higher level jobs to the area with greater focus on increasing training for local people and the ability to grow and retain local talent;
- the need to encourage more local small business start-ups;
- the challenge of delivering Capital Projects within timescales and the competitive bid process;
- business support being fragmented, making it difficult for local businesses to engage;
- the recognition of the delivery of housing being a key component in the delivery of infrastructure and the need to create more affordable homes to help retain young people in the south west;
- mobile technology (4G/5G rollout) and broadband and the delivery of the Connecting Devon and Somerset project;
- Climate Change being considered as part of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS);
- changes to the working draft of the LIS including a greater emphasis on social inclusion, clean energy, changes in politics, improving conditions for businesses and further government interest;
- how the LEP engaged with agriculture, tourism, culture and the arts;
- Members expected to make Scrutiny input and to comment on the draft Local Industrial Strategy before it was finalised by the Joint Committee in September.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Williams, **SECONDED** by Councillor Morris and

RESOLVED that

- (a) the draft Local Industrial Strategy be circulated to Members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee following the Joint Committee on 12 July in order to add value and contribute to the governance process; and
- (b) the Productivity Strategy and Local Industrial Strategy be added to the Committee's Terms of Reference.

* **19** **Acceleration of Housing Delivery in the Heart of the South West**

(Councillor Hodgson attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(2) and spoke to this item).

The Committee considered a Report which had been presented to the HotSW Joint Committee by the Joint Committee Housing Task Force on the acceleration of housing delivery in the heart of the South West.

The Report highlighted there was a clear desire to see quality housing growth delivered across the Joint Committee area as well as a growing sense of frustration that the solutions to a number of the issues holding growth back were not locally achievable. Whilst Councils were doing everything they could to address the blockages, there was a limit to what could be achieved without the support (and where necessary, intervention) of Government departments and agencies.

The Committee noted that the Joint Committee had recognised housing as a priority objective to deliver the high-quality housing needed, and to find an avenue to engage with Government to unleash economic potential in the area and facilitate quality housing growth to provide for communities of the future.

The Joint Committee was recommended to pursue an area-based package to accelerate housing delivery which should include resourcing of a strategic delivery team (capacity funding), a major infrastructure delivery fund to unlock growth and a small schemes liquidity fund to bring forward stalled sites. The proposed package was set out in Appendix 1 to the Report. The Committee further noted that the Task Force was seeking to engage with Homes England and the MHCLG Growth and Delivery Unit to work with the Joint Committee on a housing deal.

In discussion Members debated the following issues:

- the LEP was leading on the delivery of business, skills and innovation whilst Local Government had responsibility for the delivery of housing and infrastructure;
- the key challenge was around increasing supply and affordability of housing to enable businesses to recruit local people and encourage young people to remain in the South West e.g. concerns around employing carers in South Devon as they could not afford to live in the area; and
- the need to be more innovative in housing delivery, including focussing on key workers.

* **20** **Scrutiny Work Programme**

In considering the work programme, it was **RESOLVED** that the work programme be agreed with the addition of items added at the meeting:

- Review of the Productivity Strategy and Performance review
- The Comprehensive Spending Review (if available in October)
- Digital Review – 4G/5G mobile and broadband rollout
- Local Industrial Strategy review

* **21** **Dates of Future Meetings**

Dates of Future Meetings were noted as:

Thursday 17 October 2019 @ 2.15pm
Thursday 13 February 2020 @ 2.15pm.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 4.35 pm