

Heart of SW LEP CIC Board meeting

Paper 4.5 July 2017

Report title: Annual Strategic Review and Process Review

Report theme: Board

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Purpose of the report

The paper provides the Board with feedback from the Annual Strategic Review and the Process Review. The reviews were commissioned in early 2017 to consider a) progress towards the objectives in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and b) the ways in which the LEP operates and makes investment decisions. Executive summaries of both reports are attached for reference.

Recommendations

The LEP Board:

1. Notes the recommendations from the reviews and considers these as plans for changing how the LEP operates start to be implemented in the coming weeks.

Considerations

There are many positives to build on; the LEP is working well across partners and geographies and is seen as well-led with a lean team that achieves a lot. It is recognised that the Heart of the SW area is a relatively new construct so there has been a period of 'institution building' to enable the geography to work cohesively as a whole. From this start, notable points for building on this are set out below for Board consideration.

1. Improving linkages
 - a) organisationally, the Leadership Groups can work more effectively together and be more joined up, a point being incorporated in the new way of working for the LEP being developed from the Board away day.
 - b) operationally, better linkages can also be made between the different funding streams and alongside this in considering the existing investments already made and how these can be used as a stepping stone to further growth (with the future emphasis on productivity). The new commissioning approach provides the opportunity to do this
 - c) operationally there is a need to improve how learnings from Monitoring and Evaluation of investments can be fed back in to SIP decisions and to ensure M&E work can continue beyond the current programme end of 2020/21.

2. Governance, management and operations
 - a) The Process Review recommends that the Leadership Groups have a more direct operational function with a line of sight back to the Productivity Plan; this reflects the intention from the new way of working being developed
 - b) Within the Groups, consideration should be given to strengthening the role of business. Again this reflects the intention to seek wider partnership working arrangements with business and business representative organisations
 - c) To improve the visibility and delivery of cross-cutting themes such as equality and diversity, low carbon and sustainability, the Process Review
 - d) We must continue efforts to improve our transparency of decision making and of the work the LEP is doing
 - e) The lean core team approach creates strong reliance on individual knowledge and the reliance on the Chief Exec is noted. In some respects, this reflects the stage the LEP is at as a relatively new organisation. In developing the new ways of working, consideration needs to be given to strengthening the institutional memory of the LEP and reducing the reliance on personal knowledge
 - f) For noting at this stage but linked to the above: the review recommends that should resources become available in the future, consideration be given to whether a small amount of additional resource may improve the LEP's independence and flexibility.

3. Productivity Plan implications
 - a) The line of sight from individual investments back to the SEP could be strengthened by a specific LEP Action Plan – a clear implication for Productivity Plan delivery
 - b) the LEP should use this experience to encourage a similar Action Plan-type approach across other partners who will collectively be delivering the Productivity Plan, so ensuring improved alignment between local delivery activity and strategic objectives for the Heart of the SW area
 - c) careful consideration needs to be given to the aspirations within the Productivity Plan to balance ambition with these being deliverable

4. Mutual understanding: the review highlighted tensions between private and public sector partners and this is being addressed in two ways:
 - a) The Chief Exec's report sets out detail on the work being commissioned through the LEP network company on how our governance can be strengthened and alongside this is engaging with Districts to improve the effectiveness of their work with the LEP
 - b) The Action Plan to deliver the LEP's part of the drive to improve productivity gives an opportunity to set out how to make best use of private and public sector strengths

E Jones

22 June 2017