

Heart of SW LEP CIC Board meeting

Paper 5.1 January 2018

Report title: Productivity Strategy Update

Report theme: Board

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Purpose of the report

To provide an update on the Productivity Strategy.

Recommendations

The LEP Board notes the contents of this paper.

Background

The consultation for the Productivity Strategy ran until 14th December and the drafting team updating the Strategy as needed. The consultation involved a series of local authority-led events across the area, sessions at the LEP's annual conference, LEP events in Devon and Somerset, an on-line questionnaire and the ability to submit longer written responses. In addition to the feedback at the LEP and local authority events held over the period, 61 organisations responded individually of which 20 were businesses or representing business (note that 76 responses were received for the green paper published in January 2017 which also form part of the evidence base for the Strategy). A summary of the responses from the latest consultation is attached to this paper; broadly the draft was felt to have identified the right areas to work on with broadband/mobile coverage leading the priority list, whilst more work is needed to ensure the document is sufficiently aspirational and imaginative.

The Strategy is jointly overseen by the local authorities, the national parks and the LEP and the final draft will be brought to the LEP Board in March, and the Joint Committee in the same month.

Considerations

1. **Ownership:** alongside the content feedback, the consultation showed there remains a perception in some parts that the strategy is "the LEP's" or "the partnership's" rather than really owned by all partners. To address this, local authority economic development portfolio holders participated in a Strategy workshop in November and on 26th January Chief Executives of all partners have been invited to a further workshop to consider delivery implications. Further meetings will be held with all Chief Executives through 2018 to strengthen ownership.
2. **Organisation:** with the Joint Committee moving out of shadow form this year, arrangements supporting this are crystallising, moving the partnership onto a formal footing. The Joint Committee is supported by a smaller Chief Executive Advisory Group, which includes the LEP, and in which Chief Executives have been given theme leadership roles for housing,

infrastructure, skills, business support (Chris Garcia), rural & market towns, coastal towns, health and governance. The LEP already has capacity in its three Leadership Groups where many of the key partners already participate, so duplication is to be avoided; to that end the LEP has offered for the CEX theme leads to participate in the relevant Leadership Group – with Chris Garcia as the business support lead, this will mainly apply to infrastructure, skills and possibly housing. The role of the LEP and the Leadership Groups in delivering the Strategy and working with the Joint Committee will continue to evolve through 2018.

3. Delivery: the Strategy is necessarily high level and work is under way on a more detailed and shorter timescale delivery plan. This will be brought to a future LEP Board.

E Jones
16 January 2018