



LEP STRATEGY COMMITTEE – AGENDA ITEM 7

Subject: Strategy Work Programme Progress report

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Meeting date: Friday 3rd April 2020

Purpose

To update the Strategy Committee on progress with the Strategy Work Programme including an update to the Strategy Programme Delivery Plan.

Recommendations

The Strategy Committee is asked to

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Discuss progress against the Delivery Plan.

Discussion

Strategy Delivery Plan

1. The updated Strategy Delivery Plan is attached for discussion as **Appendix A**. The Strategy Committee is asked to note progress against target and consider potential corrective action against those areas highlighted Amber. As requested at the February meeting, the RAG ratings now have arrows indicating direction of travel. In addition, those actions which are additional for 2020-21 have now been added in.

Quarter 4 Activity

Decarbonisation Roadmap

2. As previously reported the LEP has committed up to £10k plus a limited amount of staff time to support the development an Industrial Decarbonisation Roadmap focussed on the Mersey Basin area. The proposal, led by Peel Land and Property and supported by the five north west LEPs, North West Business Leadership Team, the Cheshire Energy Hub and the North West Local Energy Hub received provisional approval from Innovate UK at the start of January with an indicative allocation of £35,782 from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, although public announcements on the allocation are currently on hold. Overall costs for phase 1 of the project is £119,586.
3. The LEP will lead on scoping the Outline Business Case workstream and will be looking commissioning external support, subject to final project approvals from Innovate UK, to be in place by April / May 2020 to support this work. Completion of this phase is due by July 2020, and Phase 2 of the funding competition (for funding to actually develop the roadmap) opens around the same time.



Digital Infrastructure Plan

4. Following a competitive tender exercise a consortium of FarrPoint and Hatch Regeneris have been selected to undertake the development of a Digital Infrastructure Plan for the Sub Region. Five submissions were received in total by the tender deadline, all within the budget of £40k plus VAT.
5. An inception meeting for the commission was scheduled for Thursday 2nd April and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting. Work on the plan should be completed by September 2020.

Cultural Strategy

6. Work, supported by Marketing Cheshire, to scope out a brief for the development of a cultural strategy for Cheshire and Warrington remains behind programme, with a draft expected w/c 31st March. It is expected that this work, which forms a key part of the Quality of Place Strategy will now start during Q1, 2020-21 and complete Q2, 2020-21.

Natural Capital Audit / Natural Capital Plan

7. The Invitation to Tender was issued at the start of March with an initial return date of 30th March. To recognise the disruption to normal business activity caused by the response to Covid-19, the LEP has delayed the return date by one week to Monday 6th April 2020.
8. In phase 1, the LEP will work with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Nature Partnership (which includes the three local authorities and other key public agencies), The Mersey Forest and key landowners to complete the baseline desktop research plugging remaining evidence gaps on land use and typologies.
9. Phase 2 will involve development of a Natural Capital Plan involving more detailed planning to identify potential priorities for public and private sector investment in blue and green infrastructure. For example, it may look to identify areas where investment in upstream river catchments might reduce the risks of downstream flooding, or where additional tree planting could be focussed to support carbon sequestration or improved shading in urban areas. This phase would be undertaken starting by the end of Q1/2020-21. A number of funding commitments have been received from external partners (including the local authorities) to support this phase of the project.