**LEP Strategy Committee**

**MINUTES**

Meeting Held: Thursday 9th June 2016, 2pm, LEP Office, Richmond House

**Present:**

Robert Davis (Chair) Philip Cox Nigel Schofield

Pete Waterman Andy Hulme Charlie Seward

Andrew Round

**Apologies:**

Andy Farrall Louise Morrissey Robert Mee

**Presenting:**

Kerry Billington (LEP) – Agenda Items 4 and 6

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

Robert Davis welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Robert Mee, Louise Morrissey and Andy Farrall.

**Agenda Item 2: Declarations of Interest**

Robert Davis, Andrew Round and Charlie Seward declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 4 – Local Growth Fund.

**Agenda Item 3: Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 12th May 2016 were approved. All actions were either completed or covered by the Agenda.

**Matters Arising**

*Agenda Item 5 – NGDZ*: It was confirmed that the brief on wider strategic narrative for rail infrastructure would be taken forward once current work on devolution was completed. .

**Agenda Item 4: Local Growth Fund**

Kerry Billington, LEP Programme Manager, delivered a presentation updating on the project bids received to date for LGF Round 3 and on the process to be followed and criteria used to reach a final list. Principally this follows the steps set out in the LEP Assurance and Accountability Framework, along with specific additional criteria set out by the Secretary of State and BIS officials.

Since the May meeting timescales have been revised slightly though they remain tight. An initial outline proposal has to be shared with Government by noon on 24th June with final bids submitted by noon on 28th July.

It was noted that the starting point for submissions has been the prioritised list of infrastructure investments identified in the sub-regional Transport Investment Study produced by Jacobs for the Local Transport Body. These are currently supplemented by a number of Skills and Innovation-related projects aligned to the Strategic Economic Plan, the potential Devolution Deal and the emerging recommendations of the Area Based Review.

The need to ensure robust challenge to projects in order to ensure the strongest possible bid is submitted In July was discussed. Currently the projects submitted would require approximately £275m of LGF and the potential for funding some of the submitted projects through other sources was noted.

It was agreed that Officers would undertake an initial exercise to review projects against the Secretary of State’s criteria with a view to identifying any that would not pass this test or could be funded more appropriately through other channels, in order to reduce the LGF ask to around £150m. Clear reasoning as to why individual projects are exclude are to be provided. In particular Officers highlighted that guidance from Government Officials is that we should not submit bids for cost increases for existing projects, and that we needed to be very clear that we have the capacity to deliver our bids.

The Committee agreed that bids for cost increases should be excluded and that it may be appropriate to reduce the scope of some bids if there are questions about deliverability.

Initial recommendations will be presented to the Strategy Committee at its meeting in July. In advance of this a note will be provided to outline the assessment process and provide clear guidance on the evaluation criteria and clarify the ultimate purpose and outcomes of the LGF 3 programme bid.

***Action – Kerry Billington to draft a note for Committee members outlining the assessment and prioritisation process***

**Agenda Item 5: Strategy Work Programme**

The content of the report was noted.

The draft Executive Summary for the Atlantic Gateway Science and Innovation Study was discussed. A number of the Committee expressed the view that the recommendations needed to be ‘punchier’ and outcomes clearer.

The draft version of the Quality of Place study has now been produced and will be circulated to the Committee for comment.

It was agreed that further clarity is needed on the exact nature of technical support required for the SEP refresh.

***Action – Andy Hulme to circulate the draft Quality of Place report for comment.***

***Action – Andy Hulme to circulate a note setting out the key areas of focus for technical support for the SEP refresh.***

**Agenda Item 6: Growing Places Fund**

A verbal update was provided by Kerry Billington. Further information and clarifications have now been received from the promoters of the Cheshire Green scheme and a report and recommendations will be drafted for circulation prior to the July Strategy Committee meeting.

***Action – Kerry Billington to draft a report and recommendations on Cheshire Green for circulation prior to the July meeting.***

**Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business**

**Devolution**

Philip Cox updated the Committee on the latest position. Local Authority partners are meeting w/c 20th June to consider approval to start a process of public consultation on new sub-regional governance arrangements linked to the proposed Combined Authority.

A more detailed paper setting out the current position will be presented to the LEP Discussion Forum on 22nd June.

**Agenda Item 8: Date, Time and Venue of next meeting.**

Thursday 7th July 2016, 9am – 11am, LEP Offices, Richmond House.