



Meeting Date: 26 April 2022

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel Chair's Report – Councillor Lisa Brown**

Since my last report we have had two EGSP meetings, our normal panel and a special one at which members received details of the business plans that were due at Executive before being sent to Government.

At the first meeting in March, the panel was pleased to have a presentation from Jo Lapping from Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership. This was the second time Ms Lappin had presented in my time as Chair, and it was inspiring and encouraging to see her confidence and knowledge of such a broad range of work streams that the LEP has ongoing.

The Panel was particularly keen to hear more about the work that CLEP had been doing to encourage young people through the Future Forum. Ms Lappin reported that the Forum usually had 16-18 young people involved to populate the structure. The Forum had a mix of business, public sector and representatives of the community, the age range was 18 - 35 years.

Ms Lappin also outlined some of the work undertaken with younger children to develop skills. The skills, labour supply and employment readiness of young people was a real concern for the CLEP. The pandemic and social media had eroded face to face confidence and the ability to work in teams for young people. In addition, the mental health and wellbeing of young people had been seriously impacted. All of these issues also impact the economy and the CLEP was working to equip young people to be able to contribute effectively in work.

There is real value from the panel in receiving presentations from outside bodies and I would thank everyone who takes time out of their undoubtedly busy lives to come along and speak to us, it really is appreciated.

Next item on the agenda saw the Head of Regeneration update us on the Economic Development Programme Management Office (ED.02/22). He reminded the panel of the Carlisle Projects and Programmes that had received funding. The City Council would act as the accountable body for the Future High Street Fund, Town Deal and St Cuthbert's Garden Village Programmes. In order to undertake this role, the Council established a Programme Management Office (PMO) for an initial three-year period.

The two main areas of activity for the PMO in the current financial year had been to support the delivery of the Future High Streets Fund and the Town Deal Programmes. The next steps for the PMO were to support the process that would enable the Town Deal Business Cases to be submitted to government by 24 March 2022 as detailed in the report. As mentioned earlier these would be brought to the panel at a later meeting in March for comment before going to Executive.

As we head into the start of the Shadow Authority year, how this affects our processes is always a key question from panel members, who also wondered if these posts had been filled yet. The Corporate Director of Economic Development confirmed that the appointment process was taking place. The posts would be appointed for a three-year term and would be transferred to the new authority. In response to a further question the Corporate Director responded that it was likely that the PMO would be extended after the initial three years as more funding streams were becoming available that the authority could bid for.

Moving onto the special meeting held later in March, the panel received the Business Cases as a part B item. The meeting was short, but the panel was given full assurance on many of the questions it had, and full details can be found in the minutes for the special meeting.

Cllr Lisa Brown

Chair – Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel