LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY WORK PLAN – FOCUS ON PLACES

1. ISSUE

1.1 Reviewing the development of the Local Industrial Strategy Work Programme, with a particular focus on Places.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the LEP Scrutiny Board note this report and that a more detailed presentation on this will be provided at the Scrutiny Board Meeting.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Government produced its National Industrial Strategy in November 2017 and at the same point commissioned Local Industrial Strategies, which were to be developed in partnership by Local Enterprise Partnerships. CLEP developed an ambitious and highly inclusive process for the production of its Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) with the initial draft submitted to Government in March 2019.

3.2 Since the LIS was submitted the focus has been on agreeing and finalising the evidence base to underpin the LIS. CLEP’s evidence base has been deemed to meet all requirements. The intention was then to start negotiations with key government departments around specific economic development priorities within the LIS. However it is fair to say that the process has slowed somewhat, due to changes in the machinery of government.

3.3 Irrespective of this CLEP decided that it would continue to progress its underpinning work programme, given that the opportunities and the challenges identified in the LIS remained important for Cumbria. It was therefore important that the work proceeded, with the focus being on productivity, inclusive growth and moving to a net zero carbon economy.

3.4 Members are already aware that the Local Industrial Strategy is structured around the five drivers of productivity – Ideas and Innovation; People and Skills, Business Environment; Infrastructure and Places. At its last meeting the LEP Scrutiny Board considered the People and Skills element of the programme, and following discussion with the Chair, it was agreed that this Scrutiny Board meeting should focus on the Places theme, given that the importance of this agenda has significantly increased due to the current government’s commitment to the ‘Levelling Up’ Agenda.

3.5 The LIS identified 5 key priorities for places:

- PL1 – Address cold spots of worklessness and social deprivation in Cumbria.
- PL2 – Support local place shaping programmes.
- PL3 – Encouraging housing which is the right product at the right price, in the right place.
- PL4 – Encourage and support bespoke local area economic diversification strategies.
- PL5 – Work with public sector partners to deliver high quality public services.

3.6 The Places Strategy Group is responsible for overseeing the work programme in relation to this. In addition this Strategy Group is also responsible for promoting Cumbria, given the high degree of alignment between the places agenda and promoting place, the priorities within Promoting Cumbria are:

- PC1 – Develop Brand Cumbria to effectively market Cumbria's enviable offer.
- PC2 – Develop soft landing packages for those relocating to Cumbria.
- PC3 – Promote Cumbria as the place where outdoor lifestyle meets technology businesses.
- PC4 – Promote Cumbria as a great location for inward investment.

3.7 The Places agenda has gained significant profile and traction with government as recognised by announcements on the Future High Street Fund and the Towns Deal programmes, which provide the potential of investment of up to £25 million in 100 and 101 places, respectively. Barrow, Carlisle, Maryport and Whitehaven have been shortlisted for Future High Streets Funds and Barrow, Carlisle, Cleator Moor, Milom and Workington for Towns Funds.

3.8 This level of coverage is significantly, in excess of what we might have expected. These announcements have over recent months provided the major focus for the work of the Places Group, given the potential scale of investment, which could lever in up to £225 million of investment. The Strategy Group organised a developmental workshop on maximising the potential of the funding and is in the process of working with individual District Councils to identify what specific support the Group can most helpfully provide in order to develop the proposals and to maximise the funding secured.

3.9 On the Promoting Cumbria agenda there has been significant focus on developing the Futures Campaign – Our Future and Your Future. Our Future is targeted at young people within the County and looks to promote the significant career and educational opportunities available to them. The Your Future campaign is targeted at a wide range of individuals currently living outside of the County and encouraging them to come to live, work and invest here. The Our Future campaign is currently being launched through both social and traditional media with the social media campaign currently live and a highly visible Stagecoach bus campaign due to launch in early March. Examples of the marketing collateral will be provided to the Scrutiny Board at their meeting.

3.10 In addition CLEP has also significantly increased activity in relation to inward investment and has for the first time had a Cumbrian site included in the Department of International Trade’s Northern Powerhouse Prospectus. It is hoped that the inclusion of Kingmoor Park will be formally announced at MIPIM the international property event.
3.11 The CLEP Chief Executive will provide a presentation on the work programme at the meeting.