

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Scrutiny Board

10.30 am, 20 September 2022

Present at the meeting

County Councillors

Mr B Wearing (Chair)
Mr M Wilson (Vice-Chair)
Mrs C McCarron-Holmes
Mr K Hamilton
Mr K Hitchen
Mr P Turner
Mr N Hughes
Mr B McEwan

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr P Dew and Mr S Collins.

2 MEMBERSHIP

The Board noted that South Lakes District Council had not yet appointed a new representative.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that, members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate and complete record.

4 CLEP OVERVIEW AND IMPLICATIONS OF LEP REVIEW

The Chief Executive – Cumbria LEP introduced the report by speaking about the governance of the LEP. Members heard that the CLEP had recently advertised for three new private sector Board members, representing the visitor economy, advanced manufacturing and professional services. Female applicants were particularly encouraged as CLEP must meet a gender equality target by January 2023. Interviews took place on 9 September and the aim was for CLEP to have the new appointments ratified at the AGM on 30 September 2022.

A brief discussion took place at this point regarding the role going forward of CLEP in professional development and education. Members were reassured that the LEP

Board were fully committed to ensuring sustainable work and skills development for young people and that the work programmes would stay consistent with this commitment.

An update was provided on the progress of the LEP Review, members heard that a Working Group had been formed with DHLUC officials to take forward the implications of the Levelling Up White Paper on LEPs, namely integration with Local Government by 2030 and the business of LEPs in areas that have no immediate plans for integration. An update would be provided when more information had become available as progress had stalled due to recent change of Prime Minister.

The Chief Executive – CLEP moved on to provide an update on Clean Energy projects beginning with the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) application. The UKAEA had completed its siting assessment for STEP and a recommendation has been made to BEIS with a decision expected from the Secretary of State by the end of the calendar year. A successful Parliamentary Reception was held on 27 May to maintain the profile of the Cumbria bid. A Cumbria event to thank the regional stakeholders, who had supported the bid, took place on the afternoon of 2 September 2022 with attendees also updated on Cumbria's wider clean energy ambitions. A discussion took place regarding the importance of identifying transformative opportunities for Cumbria.

Members then heard that the CLEP's submission of sites to the competition for the Heavy Pressure Vessel facility resulted in the successful shortlisting of Kingmoor Park in Carlisle, which is one of seven shortlisted sites. This facility would be the largest of the module manufacturing facilities required, with an expectation that two further sites might follow. RR-SMR state that 90% of the overall construction effort would be delivered through the manufacturing facilities, which it is envisioned would become a global export market. Over 100 applications were submitted from across the country, and so members agreed that this was a very positive result for Cumbria.

The Scrutiny Board heard that the LEP's Decarbonisation by Design pilot had now concluded. It produced eight technically valuable reports for the businesses and implementation of these would produce significant carbon savings, now and in the future. Rather than looking to scale up the programme, given the costs incurred and the consistent themes identified, it is felt that a greater return on investment would be provided by implementing the report's recommendations.

Members considered the Delivery Plan as part of this item and asked for clarification in some areas the Chief Executive provided assurance and clarified that the document was for consideration by a specialist audience with a working knowledge of the subject matter.

Members noted the contents of the report.

5 2022/23 DELIVERY PLAN

This 2022/23 Delivery Plan was considered as part of the previous item recorded at Minute 63.

6 CUMBRIA CLEAN ENERGY STRATEGY

The Chief Executive – CLEP introduced the report by explaining that Clean Energy generation was a significant priority for Cumbria LEP as the county has expertise and credibility in this area. The CLEP produced the strategy to be shared with its partners in business. It was explained that Cumbria was a net contributor to the grid but this could be increased. The plan could see the contribution create an additional 9 gigawatts of clean energy which would provide up to 13000 long term jobs in the county.

Members heard that productive conversations were now taking place on the basis of the strategy on topics including: off shore wind, fusion and innovation in nuclear, network linkage and storage.

The Chair of Cumbria LEP explained that part of the reason why the Clean Energy Strategy was commissioned was to ensure the business sector was able to consider all of the opportunities in clean energy and not make the mistake of focusing all of their energies on a single opportunity.

Members noted the contents of the report.

7 CLEP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING UPDATE

Members considered a report which provided a brief to members on the CLEP Annual General Meeting.

It was reported that the Vice Chair would represent the LEP Scrutiny Board this year at the Annual AGM. The update would include some of the following items:-

- Economic Overview
- Journey to NET Zero
- Levelling Up White Paper and implications for the LEP
- Repurposing the Cumbria Infrastructure Fund
- Economic Impact Update
- Labour Supply and Skills
- CLEP Support for Business

Members noted the contents of the report.

8 DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the LEP Scrutiny Board is due to take place on 17 February 2023.

The meeting ended 12:15 pm