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Report to: LEP Board

Date: 29 November 2017

Subject: Leeds City Region Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a Global Tech Firm

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This paper will provide the LEP Board with an update on the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership and a major Global Tech Firm and seek the Board's input and approval for this MOU to be signed.
- 1.2 This forms part of an approach to ensure that Leeds City Region capitalises on the opportunities created by 5G and "Smart City" technologies and develops a reputation as a global leader in this area.
- 1.3 Closer association with the largest global technology businesses will help us achieve our objective of becoming a recognised leading location for the creative and digital sector and to attract technology corporates to locate in the City Region.

2 Information

2.1 This report sets out:

- Company background
- An overview of the City Region's interactions with the company to date
- The purpose of the proposed MOU
- The benefits of partnering with a major global technology firm and the strategic fit with the goals of the City Region

Company background

- 2.2 The business is a leading Fortune 500 global technology solutions provider employing over 180,000 people. The business is committed to investing significant amounts in the UK, with a strong focus on R&D activity.
- 2.3 Further information on the company can be found in confidential appendix 1, due to the commercially sensitive nature of this proposed partnership.

An overview of the City Region's interactions with the Global Tech Firm to date

- 2.4 Following an introduction by the University of Leeds, the Trade & Investment Team visited the company's R&D Centre in China as part of the delegation led by Cllr Blake and Roger Marsh, Chair of the LEP Board, in February 2017.
- 2.5 A team from the company's UK office visited Leeds in June 2017 to further progress the dialogue and determine activities that are of joint strategic importance. The team were impressed by the vision set out by Cllr Blake and Roger Marsh for the Leeds City Region to become a leading Smart City Region, and especially liked the City Region approach.
- 2.6 A number of subsequent meetings in London, in addition to ongoing correspondence, has led to an agreement to sign a MOU to underpin the development of a long-term collaborative partnership between The LEP and the Global Tech Firm, particularly focussing on the Smart City agenda to ensure inclusive growth. (See 2.13)

The purpose of the proposed MOU

- 2.7 This MOU will build on the active relationships already established between Leeds City Region and the company.
- 2.8 Leeds City Region and the Global Tech Firm will look to collaborate on five key topics:
- Installation of broadband services to areas of Leeds City Region
 - Smart Cities - Global leaders in both vision and execution of Smart Cities technology
 - University R&D Collaborations – Obtaining competitive advantages in the market
 - 5G - Potential to become a 5G UK pilot region
 - Corporate Property Strategy – Collaboration on future investment plans
- 2.9 Appendix 2 (provided on a confidential basis), includes a copy of the full MOU we are proposing to sign with the company.
- 2.10 For clarity, this MOU is not exclusive and does not prohibit collaboration with other technology businesses and providers, or other regions.

The benefits of partnering with a major global technology firm

- 2.11 The company is a major brand with a global reach and a partnership with this company could help to raise the profile of Leeds City Region internationally. The signing of an MOU has the potential to secure major press coverage and attract the attention of a significant number of international businesses, demonstrating the City Region's strengths and ambitions in the digital sector.

- 2.12 Being more closely associated with a leading global technology firm would enhance the City Region's reputation as a leading location for the creative and digital sector and will help with our objective of attracting more leading technology businesses to the City Region, creating a significant cluster.

Strategic fit with the goals of Leeds City Region

- 2.13 The LEP recognises that technology is a driving factor in achieving our goal of 'inclusive growth', ensuring all our people and places are able to contribute to, and benefit from, economic prosperity.
- 2.14 Both The LEP and company recognise the need to use technology innovations to deliver more efficient services, in order to meet the needs of ageing populations and to ensure Leeds City Region has the infrastructure and skills needed to be competitive in a global economy.
- 2.15 The company are passionate about the potential for Smart City technologies to address some of the UK's most pressing urban challenges.
- 2.16 The company can assist Leeds City Region on the challenge of scaling up its most successful projects and encouraging continued innovation in a wider range of services, to become a leading Smart City Region.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That the LEP Board approves the signing of this non-exclusive MOU by the LEP Board Chair with the Global Tech Firm to help the City Region realise its ambition of becoming a Smart City Region and enhancing its international profile as a leading location for technology businesses.
- 3.2 That the LEP Board endorses the strategy of using the MOU with the Global Tech Firm to galvanise Smart City and 5G activities across the Leeds City Region and to ensure a joined up approach in these areas.