
Report to: Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Board (LEP Board)

Date: 14 July 2020

Subject: **COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan**

Director: Alan Reiss, Director, Policy Strategy and Communications

Author(s): Alex Clarke, Sarah Bowes

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To update the LEP Board members on the COVID-19 economic recovery plan, following discussions and input from Panels.

2. Information

- 2.1 The full implications of COVID-19 on the region and its economy are still to be understood. However, it is already clear that it will have a significant long-term impact. At a city region level, work is taking place both to support the immediate response and to begin to develop what might be required in recovery, in the form of an economic recovery plan. This paper focusses on that latter element.

- 2.2 The longer-term planning for recovery for the Leeds City Region is being overseen by a new West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Board, which is a working group of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and brings together the region's local authority leaders with representatives from key partnerships and stakeholders. At their first meeting on 30 April 2020, the Board agreed a strategic vision for recovery:

1. developing resilient and thriving businesses, boosted by innovation, high skills and entrepreneurialism;
2. developing an inclusive economy that provides people with a decent standard of living;
3. a clean growth recovery that grasps the opportunity to deliver sustainability across all our places.

- 2.3 To achieve this vision, the Board has set its provisional areas of focus as:
- To protect and create **good jobs** by developing resilient businesses through increasing innovation, trade and investment.

- To ensure everyone can develop the **skills** they need to secure a job or to start their own business.
- To develop **infrastructure** that unlocks economic opportunities and delivers resilience both for our communities and environment.

2.4 At their meeting on 11 June, the Board agreed a draft list of the key challenges they are seeking to address in the recovery plan for each of the areas of focus, which will drive proposals for products and programmes.

Good jobs, through innovation, trade and investment

- Delivering levelling up through increased productivity
- Rescuing and building resilience across strategic regional sectors
- Making supply chains more resilient
- Increasing digital & innovation driven entrepreneurialism
- Securing good work and inclusive employment environments

Skills

- Supporting the unemployed back to work
- Preventing NEETs and high volumes of 16-24 unemployment
- Addressing inequality of access to learning
- Building a strong skills offer for the regional labour market
- Improving skills utilisation in the workplace
- Delivering relevant, transferable skills for employment and entrepreneurship

Infrastructure and Capital projects

- Investing to deliver levelling-up of the North
- Building inclusive communities for successful towns and cities of the future
- Putting people first in the delivery of new homes
- Building the infrastructure that protects and connects both urban and rural communities and businesses
- Investing in new low carbon sectors and infrastructure, creating new markets and jobs, and building resilient communities
- Providing accessibility through public transport and digital connectivity

Across all these areas there needs to be a sharp focus on inclusive growth that reduces inequalities and ensures wellbeing, as well as capitalising on the opportunity to embed the positive, climate-friendly behaviour change seen through the crisis.

2.5 The plan will align with, but not duplicate, local plans being developed by Councils, as well as the Transport Recovery Plan being led by Transport Committee and other regional plans e.g. health.

2.6 Drafts of the emerging recovery plan have been shared with the Panels of the LEP to give the opportunity for comment and ensure both the policy priorities and products and programmes will deliver for people and businesses in the region. This has been reinforced through informal discussions with most of the Panels and a summary of the input received is described in the appendix.

- 2.7 The Board will be given a verbal update on the development of the plan, with an initial version of the plan expected to be presented to the Combined Authority on 27 July. As the implications of COVID-19 continue to develop, it is expected that the plan will be further updated, which will be brought to LEP board to make sure priorities remain relevant and are amended as required to meet the recovery needs of the region.

3. Clean Growth Implications

- 3.1 Clean growth implications are being comprehensively considered through the development of the plan, with both the economic opportunities clean growth presents and the challenges that need to be overcome fundamental to the future success of the City Region.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Delivery of all elements of the economic recovery plan will require significant financial resource. As is made clear in the plan, Government funding is required. These requirements will be considered through the future business planning of the Combined Authority / LEP, and key asks and bids submitted to Government at appropriate times.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications as a direct result of this report.

6. Staffing Implications

- 6.1 There are no staffing implications as a direct result of this report.

7. External Consultees

- 7.1 All the LEP Panels have been consulted on the emerging plan. In addition, there has been regular engagement with Local Authority officers developing local economic recovery plans, to ensure alignment.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 LEP Board endorse the direction of the emerging economic recovery plan.

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

Appendix: Economic Recovery Plan - Panel discussion summaries.