

Coast to Capital

Meeting: Coast to Capital Board Meeting
Date: Thursday 15 October 2020
Report Title: Catalyst South
Report by: Jonathan Sharrock
Item No: 4) a)
Part: A

Recommendation:

The Board is asked to note the contents of this paper.

1. Context

The Conservative Party manifesto talked about the creation of 'pan regional partnerships' which would help to deliver the Government's local growth priorities. Some parts of England already have well-established examples of these (such as the Northern Powerhouse). Government has encouraged LEPs in the South of England to develop our own version – in order to provide a clear voice for the wider south east region in the run-up to the Devolution White Paper and future spending and investment decisions.

'Catalyst South' was developed by the five LEPs during lockdown. The area covered is significant, running from the Solent to Kent, Essex and Hertfordshire. This provides sufficient scale on which to articulate the common priorities of the region.

The narrative for 'Catalyst South' is set out in the attached letter (Annex A) and material to the Chancellor. It reflects the strengths and strategic importance of a region which generates 20% of UK GVA and contains the country's major international gateways.

This development means that the South East now sits on the same footing as all other regions of England. The LEP Network has made a confident and ambitious pitch for further recognition and funding from Government, reflecting the capacity of LEPs to drive economic growth in all regions of the country.

2. Next Steps

The initiative has been welcomed by Government, and we await their response. Most other pan regional partnerships have been given funds and encouragement from Ministers to develop an economic narrative which will complement the

eventual content of the devolution white paper.

3. Diversity Statement

The arrival of the new (female) Coast to Capital LEP Chair introduces greater diversity to the pan regional partnership of five other LEP Chairs. There are no other diversity implications for consideration.

4. Legal Statement

There are no legal issues for consideration with this report

5. Finance Statement

There are no budgetary requirements for the formation or inclusion in the partnership.

Annexes:

- Annex A – Letter to the Chancellor from Christian Brodie
- Annex B – Catalyst South Prospectus

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Meeting: Coast to Capital Board Meeting
Date: Thursday 15 October 2020
Report Title: Stronger, Smarter, Greener Implementation
Report by: Kirsten Trussell
Item No: 4) b)
Part: A

Recommendation:

Board to discuss and note progress on creating a clear, defined and transformational regional economic strategy in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing economic and uncertainty. This is closely aligned to the earlier item on the Board Agenda under Item 3, Delivery, Investment Approach – Aligning to Stronger, Smarter, Greener.

1. Summary

Since the last Board meeting in July, we have launched our regional plan to stimulate economic recovery and inclusive growth – **Build back stronger, smarter and greener** (or ‘Stronger, Smarter, Greener’) – and submitted it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This is the culmination of a long period of planning; from our updated Strategic Economic Plan (2017), to extensive preparations for a Local Industrial Strategy and now, consideration of the continued economic and social shocks ahead as a result of the pandemic.

The Board has a strong desire to focus on delivery, using our own resources and expertise as a LEP to provide regional economic leadership and bring about positive change despite and because of these challenging circumstances. Our Stronger, Smarter, Greener implementation plans, described by this paper, and also under Item 3, Delivery on this Board agenda, will complement and align with efforts by local authorities and other partners to address these same shocks within their own professional, geographical and democratic remits.

We have updated our 2017 vision to reflect where we are now – **“To build back stronger, smarter and greener – working with our partners to make a difference to people and places and ensuring that our region is a fantastic place to live, grow and succeed.”**

2. Context

Our extensive [COVID-19 Economic Impact Assessment](#) estimates that Coast to Capital regional GVA is likely to decline by up to 17% in 2020, with the potential of a 26% decline in the event of a second national lockdown. In March 2020 we began developing a regional pitch for our area to accompany a Local Industrial Strategy with the express aim to simplify the narrative and increase public and private investment. In light of the entirely unforeseen and disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on our area, our regional pitch was evolved to set out a plan for recovery and to stimulate future prosperity. 'Stronger, Smarter, Greener' sets out a series of placed based, transformational infrastructure projects. These proposals lead on from the narrative and the 'shovel ready' projects we submitted to Robert Jenrick MP in response to the Getting Building Fund and which secured over £19 million of new, short term investment for our region.

In September, following engagement of regional MPs and Council Leaders, we launched Stronger, Smarter, Greener to an audience of over 200 partners attending our first ever virtual AGM. The initial response from partners has been extremely positive and through our proposed programme delivery Governance and process (under Item 3 on this agenda) we will continue to align the wider regional effort with local priorities.

We have submitted Stronger Smarter, Greener to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to set the tone for future negotiations and potential strategic investment for our region with Government in the context of our wider effort on Catalyst South, to create a counterbalance to the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.

3. Stronger, Smarter, Greener Programme Delivery

The earlier Item 3, Delivery on this Board agenda set out the need for and description of new governance and associated development and approval gateway process for Stronger, Smarter, Greener programme delivery. These proposals are endorsed by the Investment Committee for Board agreement. They include the creation of a new Investment Committee Sub-Committee and Integrated Programme Office to align capacity and resources within the organisation.

We are making significant progress on headline projects under our list of 'asks' in Stronger, Smarter, Greener – the Innovation Centre in Crawley and Natural Capital Investment Company – with secured funding from the Getting Building Fund and Local Growth Fund. We are working with project partners to produce the full business cases for these two projects, with potential to use further funding for expert and technical consultancy from the Coast to Capital 'Designated Fund' budget. This budget was approved by the Board in March

2020 and the Chief Executive given delegated authority (as SRO for the Programme) to approve funding requests.

We are actively developing other projects such as the Home Decarbonisation Academy pilot and delivery of the Skills Action Plan. More detail of these can be found under Strategy and Policy in the Executive Report.

4. Partner engagement

Over coming weeks we will be working closely with our public, private and third sector partners to align regional and local priority project planning, as per the arrangements set out under Item 3, Delivery. This will include further development of the list of projects or 'asks' set out in Stronger, Smarter, Greener; projects submitted in response to the call for the Getting Building Fund; and projects brought forward by our partners that support local and regional economic recovery and future growth.

To aid pipeline development we have commenced planning for a series of regional themed workshops to continue to identify those interventions (investment projects or otherwise) that will have the most economic, social and environmental benefit for the area. This will be a continuation of co-creation approach we undertook in preparation for a Local Industrial Strategy and through our series of 'opportunity sector' roundtables in November last year. We have had a number of approaches following our AGM to do this in collaboration with partner organisations and will begin to announce details of workshops in the near future.

5. Diversity Statement

The proposals set out in Stronger, Smarter, Greener are fully designed to address diversity across our area, in terms of the private sector and also different levels of socio-economic and environmental indicators.

6. Legal Statement

There are no legal issues for consideration with this report

7. Finance Statement

There are no other financial considerations.