

## Local Industrial Strategy Big Debate

Wednesday 17 July 2019

Reigate & Banstead Council Town Hall, Castlefield Road, Reigate, Surrey

### Event Notes

The below Q&A was recorded from the Panel discussions and questions from the attendees.

- Q. Lessons learned to date?
  - A. We have learned that each LEP is taking a different approach. Some are focussing on one Grand Challenge, where others are addressing a mix. We need to be able to articulate our complex region in a simple way. Gatwick is an economic driver, but we also have our cities such as Brighton & Hove.
  
- Q. What unique features does Coast to Capital have?
  - A. Global connectivity with a strong economy around Gatwick
  - A. Make more of our diversity and the opportunities it holds. We can connect our niche areas so we can be successful together
  - A. We have a knowledge intensive area through the various universities, solving problems of the future
  - A. We need to develop a 'golden thread' narrative for our region that has a clear and distinctive message
  
- Q. How do we explain our narrative on sustainable growth/low impact which also reflects our ambitions?
  - A. There are opportunities in public transport to develop a sustainable growth narrative further
  - A. We can work with our Local Authority partners to bring more standards of innovation in the construction industry
  - A. Economic growth and clean growth are often in conflict with each other, but we can achieve sustainable growth through expanding on the sustainability that is already in place
  - A. Make clean growth accessible to all, i.e., enabling electric vehicles to be more affordable and infrastructure in place to support it
  - A. We can harness the 'leap frog' technologies being developed in our region to address big ticket polluters and attract big business to take on the clean growth agenda.
  
- Q. Can we become the first 5G region to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural?

- A. 5G can open out the wealth of opportunities in the Internet of Things. The following work is currently being developed:
  - Local Authority investment in digital infrastructure
  - Digital Catapult Brighton
  - Network Rail project on 5G railway
- A. We need to stimulate businesses to further develop this area through innovation
- A. There are huge opportunities if we can combine 5G capabilities with advanced technologies. For example, the Quantum Computing Lab at University of Sussex could make great steps forward with instant connectivity
- Q. How will Coast to Capital ensure a consistent implementation of the LIS across the region? Does it need to be consistent?
  - A. Yes, it is imperative that we have a consistent implementation approach otherwise we will not be successful. Partnership working is vital to the LIS delivery and we will continue to work very closely with our partners and stakeholders
  - A. There is a network of the various universities in the South and we will use these networks to engage on the LIS delivery. We can also link businesses to these networks to ensure there is a clear understanding on how they can engage with the universities
- Q. How do we develop a coherent narrative for our diverse region?
  - A. We will be analysing the LIS research and working with partners to establish a clear narrative to take to Government. This is to ensure we are in agreement on the message – we all need to be bought into it otherwise we won't be compelling to Government
  - A. We could develop a narrative around having a 'creative hub around Gatwick'. This could also be our USP
  - We need to combat the image of our region being the 'wealthy south'. We have low unemployment – but we have a lot of talent commuting outside of our area for higher value jobs
  - We also have a conflicting problem with policies for more housing units, but our area also needs commercial space. Need to find balance
- Q. Retaining and training young people. What are the skills needs?
  - A. FE and schools need investment and support so we can address skills gaps
  - A. In order to address the skills shortage we need to understand our industries of the future and have education providers meet the skills needs
  - A. Encourage more employers to invest in the employee training or re-training. For instance, Brighton & Hove Buses has retrained staff from the construction sector
  - A. Vocation and degree apprenticeships are increasing in popularity – we need to ensure the capacity is in place to address the demand
  - A. Need to think about the future of the workplace and AI technology advances. Recently there has been an increase in demand for softer skills and leadership and management training for young people
  - A. Need to encourage more entrepreneurialism in education
- Q. What would you like to see in the future (asked of the work experience students)?
  - A. We would like to see more business and entrepreneurial activity in schools. Make it more accessible for young people to gain business experience and enterprise

- Q. How can we address our commercial space issues?
  - A. Manor Royal is a productive business park, but it needs new investment and more creative solutions to expansion. For example, development could grow vertical instead of horizontal.
  - A. Need more business parks like Manor Royal across the Coast to Capital area
  - A. We need to position our business infrastructure need properly in the LIS. Government will use LISs to decide on which areas need further investment, but also, which areas need policy interventions.
  
- Q. How can we drive our international profile?
  - A. We have a programme of research that will gather evidence on our assets and highlight economic markets to exploit
  - A. Creative industries are increasingly looking to US markets post Brexit, so need to look at other markets outside of the EU
  - A. We need to encourage business-led strategies into tourism destinations
  
- Q. How should we engage with other south east LEPs to develop linked LISs?
  - A. Coast to Capital have set up a Southern LEPs group, which is currently working together to share learning on developing LISs and identify wider south east priorities
  - A. We also work closely with the Greater London Authority on our strategic links through the London to Brighton corridor
  
- Q. How can we address the economic conflict between our urban towns and rural areas?
  - A. We need to develop a 'golden thread' that works for both urban and rural. There can be no conflict between our areas if we are to improve our productivity
  
- Q. How should future funding be prioritised?
  - A. Funding for clean growth/sustainability
  - A. Infrastructure
  - A. Leap frog technology to help roll technology out to businesses
  - A. Alternative energy sources
  - A. Transport infrastructure and construction
  - A. Digital connectivity
  - A. Commercial space – to remove restrictions
  - A. Social infrastructure so that we can have more locally working residents
  
- Q. How can we address issues with our commuting population? Can this be an advantage rather than a problem?
  - A. We need to promote more about the high quality of life of our residents to businesses. If we promote this more we could get more residents living and working within the area
  - A. It is challenging, but we should encourage our businesses to pay close to London wages – or ones that are competitive with London
  - A. We could be a trailblazer region that uses technology in a more efficient way that allows residents to work and live locally. We should try and get more employees to commute into our area rather than out of our area
  - Continue to be ambitious but also positive about our successes. We should not only focus on what needs improving

- Place is one of our strongest assets and we need to promote this more.

## Hopes and Fears

At the beginning of the event we used the Slido application to facilitate a poll of the 'Hopes and Fears' of our region. We asked attendees to contribute to the poll and below is the transcript of entries, which have been grouped into themes.

### Hopes:

#### Prosperity

- Hope - to create economic, social and environmental prosperity
- Hope - a prosperous economy around Gatwick
- Hope: accelerated innovation , investment and sustaining business growth hopefully will be the focal points for securing a prosperous and thriving local economy and environment
- Hope to thrive commercially
- Hope. Increases its economic and social prosperity

#### Equality

- Hope that much more attention will be paid to equalising gender pay gap where it is really huge e.g. in Mole Valley

#### International

- Hope; develop international links to specific destinations

#### Innovation

- Hope - use of innovative solutions to address C21 challenges Fear - failure to adapt/adopt AI.
- Don't hope, just plan to let this LEP area innovate. It is so capable. World beating.

#### Productivity

- Hope: bucking the recent trend in productivity
- Hope to move up from 7th in economic terms
- Hope: our economy continues to get stronger in futures years.

#### Attractiveness

- I hope that Coast to Capital get to creative the most attractive region to do business in anywhere in the UK. Attractive to work and live.
- Hope that we can deliver a strategy that gains attention and recognition

- Hope to that the dynamism of the area is recognised and supported

### Competitive

- Hope - that the area capitalises on its areas of growth & competitive advantage
- Hope to compete with other strong economies to west (UK M25)-fearful we won't

### Young People

- Hope - I hope that we can continue to support young people in raising awareness of the fantastic opportunities available in the region
- Hope: talented young people

### Sustainability/Low carbon

- Hope we can secure investment in sustainable transport to provide a genuine alternative to the car.
- Hope - a model of sustainable growth
- Hope to support transition to low carbon economy

### Brexit

- Hope the region can still trade with Europe if we have a no deal brexit!

### Collaboration

- HOPE Businesses are helped to collaborate for maximum impact from the great skills and resources in the region
- Better integration and collaboration across the region to enable good growth
- That the LIS galvanizes the C2C area including the business community.

### Skills/Training

- Hope: increased skills and workplace knowledge for the next generation of employees in the region - raise aspirations
- That skill gaps are plugged for local industry via Stronger School and business relationships

### High value jobs

- Hope - a modern economy with top quality local jobs for local people.
- Hope we have good quality jobs so people do not need to commute to London

### Connectivity

- We become the most globally connected region with the best digital infrastructure and most pioneering businesses

## **Fears:**

### Economy in decline

- Fear. Slips behind neighboring economies.
- Fear - We get left behind and our economy stagnates.
- The area gets left behind versus other better connected areas

### Not attractive/competitive

- Fear we cannot make the case for investment due to perceptions as to our prosperity
- Fear = Squeezed between London and developments like the Oxford - Cambridge Arc and Thames Estuary so lower profile, investment, future opportunities
- The Government overlooks the SE as it did with the recent future High Street Fund shortlist none in EM3 & C2C.

### Housing

- With all the housing being built what about the infrastructure to support it i.e. schools, doctors surgeries
- Too much housing being built

### Government attention

- Fear that government will undermine strategic value if Gatwick

### Political uncertainty

- Fear: that the political environment needs to settle down very soon to help facilitate this

### Space/Land use

- Too much congestion

## **Slido Questions**

Throughout the event the audience submitted questions through the Slido application. Some of the questions were answered by the panellists, but the transcript of questions is listed below and have been categorised into themes.

### 5G/Data

1. Open or closed data? What is the best way forward?
2. How do we balance the requirement to provide IoT access to all, versus the desire to monetise data by some large companies?

3. Are there health risks of 5G? What's the risk v the benefit?
4. How safe is 5G? Lots of reports that the long term effects are unknown?
5. Can we be the first 5G region?
6. We can only be a 5G region if we bridge the digital divide between rural and urban: broadband, fibre and mobile.

### Collaboration

7. Need to turn from discussing enablers to the real strategic question of what the region will do collectively in future to maximise value for all of us
8. How should we engage with other south east LEPs to develop linked industrial strategies to compete with the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine
9. We can see how Brighton is v exciting. But it feels different to Surrey culturally and quite a long way away. What is in it for Brighton to link with Surrey?
10. How do we make sure the LIS translates across councils in the region both at county & district level to ensure they can deliver tangible outcomes collectively?
11. That c2c remains connected to the Capital with the change in LEP boundaries

### Advantages

12. We can be too negative about London describing it as a problem rather than an advantage. Good to hear LIS will look beyond commuting issues.

### Young people

13. Where are Coast to Capital's Apprenticeship Levy payers based i.e. where are the most apprenticeship jobs based? How are these young people supported by C2C?
14. Bringing business into school is possible through the Enterprise Adviser Network to help support the link between education and business
15. Great to hear the voice of the young people present today
16. How can we grow more high quality work experience places for young people locally that encourage them to stay when they leave education
17. We have a youth Mayor for Surrey. How willing are C2C to get engaged with young people over their LIS?
18. Our decisions and investment will impact the most on the next generation - we have students here today - what are their priorities for the future? #onthespot
19. How do you engage with young people in the development of the narrative and vision, as they will be critical to the delivery of the LIS

### Digital infrastructure

20. Is the current digital infrastructure sufficient to attract and retain key skills and have younger generation want to be a part of?
21. Leverage digital technology excellence (around Brighton etc.) into low productivity businesses region-wide

### Skills Training

22. Where are Coast to Capital's Apprenticeship Levy payers based i.e. where are the most apprenticeship jobs based? How are these young people supported by C2C?
23. Challenge around skills - rooted in old fashioned approaches to careers advice?
24. WEF forecast that 42% of people in current employment will need to re-skill or up skill. It's not just a challenge for the young and will the LIS address this?
25. (Don't forget FE colleges!)

### Universities

26. How can universities better communicate their offer to businesses?
27. How have the universities (Brighton and Sussex) developed their offering to take advantage of, leverage and build the Brighton creative industries economy

### Commuting

28. In C2C's 2 LAs "that generate significant wages for the local workforce, hence workers commute into these places" how is this sustained so far from HE provision
29. How can we address the (disproportionate?) number of out-commuters to encourage more local working as well as address some of the skill shortages?
30. Persuading people to stop commuting into London relies on changing perceptions around the opportunities and lifestyle benefits of working and living locally

### Transport Infrastructure

31. Much more investment is needed in East/West transport infrastructure particularly around the "broken" M25 junctions where commuters are very poorly served.
32. Biggest airport in our region but most inadequate and congested motorway and railway. Access

### International profile

33. BHAFC will soon be publishing a report on their local economic and social impact. The football club is a key asset for promoting this region internationally.
34. How can we co-ordinate & drive the region's international profile, particularly outside of the EU, to create inbound & outbound opportunities?

### Innovation

35. Why not work with R&D businesses in our region? It's not just C2C's universities that specialise at



the leading edge of technologies like 5G!

36. How are we able to accelerate investment in innovation and emerging technologies as a catalyst for economic growth?

#### Gatwick

37. Gatwick is privately owned - how do we engage with them to unlock potential investment in our region in return for potential expansion?

38. If Gatwick is such a big differentiator, how can maximise advantage for existing/ future businesses? E.g. better transport links and products aligned with airport

#### Employee base

39. Interesting slant on finances Claire. High value salaries and no cost to travel and less time spent commuting is attractive to our region. Flexible work too.

#### New markets

40. Spot on Sue. What markets should we be developing from opportunities we have based on skills and capabilities?

#### USP/Narrative

41. Missing USP: Space sector has a strong, long standing footprint in Coast to Capital.

42. What does all this mean to an SME business - what tangible difference will it make to their growth? How will this be communicated in a way that they understand?

43. How do we differentiate ourselves as a region - versus Oxbridge? London. Big cities?

44. Our region needs a simple message and the panel mentions creative industries which is worth over 100 billion great idea.

45. Shouldn't the main thread be to create a SMART REGION? True driver of productivity. This region has all of the ingredients necessary to be the envy of others...

46. How can we compete with the likes of Oxford-Cambridge Corridor to make us stand out? Doesn't Gatwick need to feature as perhaps our only international brand?

#### Future public funding

47. Recent Gov't funding calls have been predicated on local levels of deprivation, C2C doesn't in the main score on this measure, impact on future funding????

48. What does each panel member think are the top 3 government investments we should ask for?

49. How much government funding is likely for local industrial strategy projects?

#### Sustainability/Clean growth

50. Affordability and reliability of environmentally friendly transportation options make it a less attractive option resulting in congestion. How can we help?

51. Should more be done to identify and promote local innovation towards an Environmentally sustainable economy such as the Metro Bus initiative in Crawley/Gatwick
52. In a world where a 'climate emergency' is being declared how do we explain our narrative on sustainable growth/low impact which also reflects our ambitions
53. Building in the green belt

#### Rural economy

54. Gatwick is also 'nestled' in rural landscapes. How can the LIS support rural and agricultural economies too? Is there a conflict?

#### Diversity

55. Is the diversity of the region a strength or a weakness?