



LEP STRATEGY COMMITTEE – AGENDA ITEM 6

Subject: Covid-19 Recovery Planning

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Purpose

To update the Strategy Committee on progress with the development of a post-Covid 19 recovery plan including proposals for stakeholder engagement to test emerging thinking.

Recommendations

The Strategy Committee is asked to

- a) Note the content of the report
- b) Note progress in developing the outline, structure and purpose of the recovery plan
- c) Discuss the proposed priorities and key messages for the period to January 2021

Discussion

Linking Recovery to Local Industrial Strategy

1. The LEP Strategy Committee received an update at its meeting on 12th June 2020 into the work being progressed to support the ‘restart and recovery’ of the Cheshire and Warrington economy as the lockdown restrictions imposed to restrict the spread of Covid-19 are eased. This included the revised vision of making Cheshire and Warrington the **UK’s healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy.**
2. This paper sets out the proposed approach to bringing together the ongoing strands of activity responding to the economic and social impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region into a single recovery plan.
3. It looks at the purpose of the plan, what its key messages might be and how it might be structured and developed.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

4. To be clear, the Recovery Plan is not a strategy – its purpose is to set out a practical plan for action and delivery for the period from 2020 – 2023 and marks a shift from being reactive to being more proactive. To that end it will be:
 - Consistent with our long-term ambitions (as set out in the Strategic Economic Plan and Local Industrial Strategy), but recognises the likely need for some short-term deviations as well as some more lasting changes



- A call to action across a broad range of stakeholders. Whilst the LEP may ‘hold the pen’ on the Recovery Plan, for it to be successful it needs the support and commitment of a whole range of parties
- A vehicle for progressing our key strategic priorities at a time that government is keen to back realistic propositions that could boost recovery
- Dynamic and able to adapt and flex as the wider environment changes
- Evidence-based
- Build on the early work undertaken by the LEP and partners as part of the response and restart phases.

APPROACH

5. In summary terms, the approach to developing the Recovery Plan is set out below.
 - Long-term approach remains that set out in the Local Industrial Strategy, albeit with some refinements to reflect the impact of Covid-19 and some of its lasting impacts
 - The Recovery Plan charts the short-term path (up to 3 years). Initial priorities and key messages for the period through to January 2021 will also be set out clearly as an initial action plan, and showing that recovery will need input from a range of partners.
 - In drafting, there needs to be a reflection also of the priorities expressed by government in launching its Comprehensive Spending Review and making sure that our thinking takes account of these.
 - We need to be clear about what our proposals are likely to cost (order of magnitude) and how they might be funded
 - We need to test our thinking with those the plan is aimed at, especially business and also government
 - One of the ‘deviations’ mentioned above is likely to be the need to actively target job creation to replace jobs lost as a consequence of the pandemic and lockdown. A big part of this would involve concerted and coordinated inward investment and place marketing activity

KEY MESSAGES

6. The key messages to be brought out through the Recovery Plan should include (but not be limited to): -
 - This is a joined-up plan to support recovery and job creation
 - Parts of it are happening already (for example the £15.5m secured from Government through the Getting Building Fund, and the creation of the Workforce Recovery Group).
 - It is multi-dimensional, looking at people, place and key sectors
 - It is driven by an ambition to make Cheshire and Warrington the UK’s most Healthy, Inclusive, Sustainable and Fast-growing economy
 - A successful Cheshire and Warrington will support the wider regional and national recovery



- Local people, politicians and structures know best what is needed on the ground to deliver a sustained, sustainable recovery – but need the decision-making powers and resources to make it happen

STRUCTURE

7. A proposed outline structure for the plan is set out below.
 - Introduction
 - The social and economic crisis that is driving the response
 - Impacts on our people, place and sectors
 - Our immediate response and restart activity
 - The plan for recovery
 - Short term jobs growth
 - Support for business start-up and scale-up
 - Accelerating the transition to a green economy
 - Supporting young people in education and transition from education
 - Attracting investment
 - How supporting our recovery also aligns to government priorities for the Comprehensive Spending Review
 - strengthening the UK’s economic recovery from COVID-19 by prioritising jobs and skills
 - levelling up economic opportunity across all nations and regions of the country by investing in infrastructure, innovation and people – thus closing the gap with our competitors by spreading opportunity, maximising productivity and improving the value add of each hour worked
 - improving outcomes in public services, including supporting the NHS and taking steps to cut crime and ensure every young person receives a superb education
 - making the UK a scientific superpower, including leading in the development of technologies that will support the government’s ambition to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050
 - strengthening the UK’s place in the world
 - improving the management and delivery of our commitments, ensuring that all departments have the appropriate structures and processes in place to deliver their outcomes and commitments on time and within budget
 - Accelerating our medium-long term plans and identification of key projects
 - Making a case for increased local decision making and resources (Devolution)
8. In line with the ambition for this work to be evidence-based, the recovery plan will be informed by a study undertaken for the LEP by Mickledore. The report (see the Executive Summary at **Appendix A**) looks at the potential impacts of Covid on the local economy and looks to identify potential intervention measures and opportunities that the LEP and others could progress.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

9. The LEP is committed to making sure that its thinking on recovery has been tested with the business community and wider stakeholders, recognising the constraints that still remain on



face-to-face gatherings. As such, a number of Zoom ‘roundtables’ are being arranged for the start of September. As with the Local Industrial Strategy engagement, these sessions will be targeted at more senior representatives from the business community, will be ‘Chatham House’ and limited to a maximum of around 20 attendees per session in order to give everyone time to contribute.

TIMESCALES

10. The current intention is to have a draft of the recovery plan ready for the end of August to support the roundtable engagement events mentioned above. The action plan which supports short term delivery (over the next six months) will be ready ahead of this and indeed some of the activities are already underway.
11. Engagement activity will be undertaken in early September linked potentially to an announcement around the new shared vision for the sub-region, and the final plan should be ready for the end of September to support any submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review.